

Development Discourse & the Postcolonial Challenge – The Case of Fiji's Aid Industry

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Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Paul B. Hodge

July 2009

In memory of Lenore Smith

Professor, your love of Classics and intellect inspired me...

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my adorable and sometimes mischievous children Lucas and Charlee. Thank you beautiful people; I still have so much more to learn from you.

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List of acronyms

ACSSP	Australian Civil Society Support Programme
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development (formerly ACFOA)
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ACP	Africa/Caribbean/Pacific (EU grouping)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANU	Australian National University
APHEDA	Australian People for Health Education and Development Abroad
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCF	Citizens Constitutional Forum
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSI	Civil Society Index
DFID	Department for International Development
DTP	Diplomacy Training Program
ECREA	Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy
EU	European Union
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
FWCC	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
FML	Fiji Muslim League
FPA	Family Planning Australia
FSP Fiji	Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific - Fiji
FSPI	Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International
FWRM	Fiji Women's Rights Movement

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GONGO	Government Non-Government Organisation
GP	Greenpeace Pacific
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committees
IAG	Institute of Australian Geographers
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCW	National Council of Women
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NZ	New Zealand
NZODA	New Zealand Official Development Assistance
PACFAW	Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women
PANG	Pacific Network on Globalisation
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PCRC	Pacific Concerns Resource Centre
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
RFHA	Reproductive and Family Health Association
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RRRT	Regional Rights Resource Team
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SHD	Sustainable Human Development
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission

SPACHEE	South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology and Environment
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Program
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office of Project Services
US	United States
USP	The University of the South Pacific
WB	The World Bank
WAC	Women's Action for Change

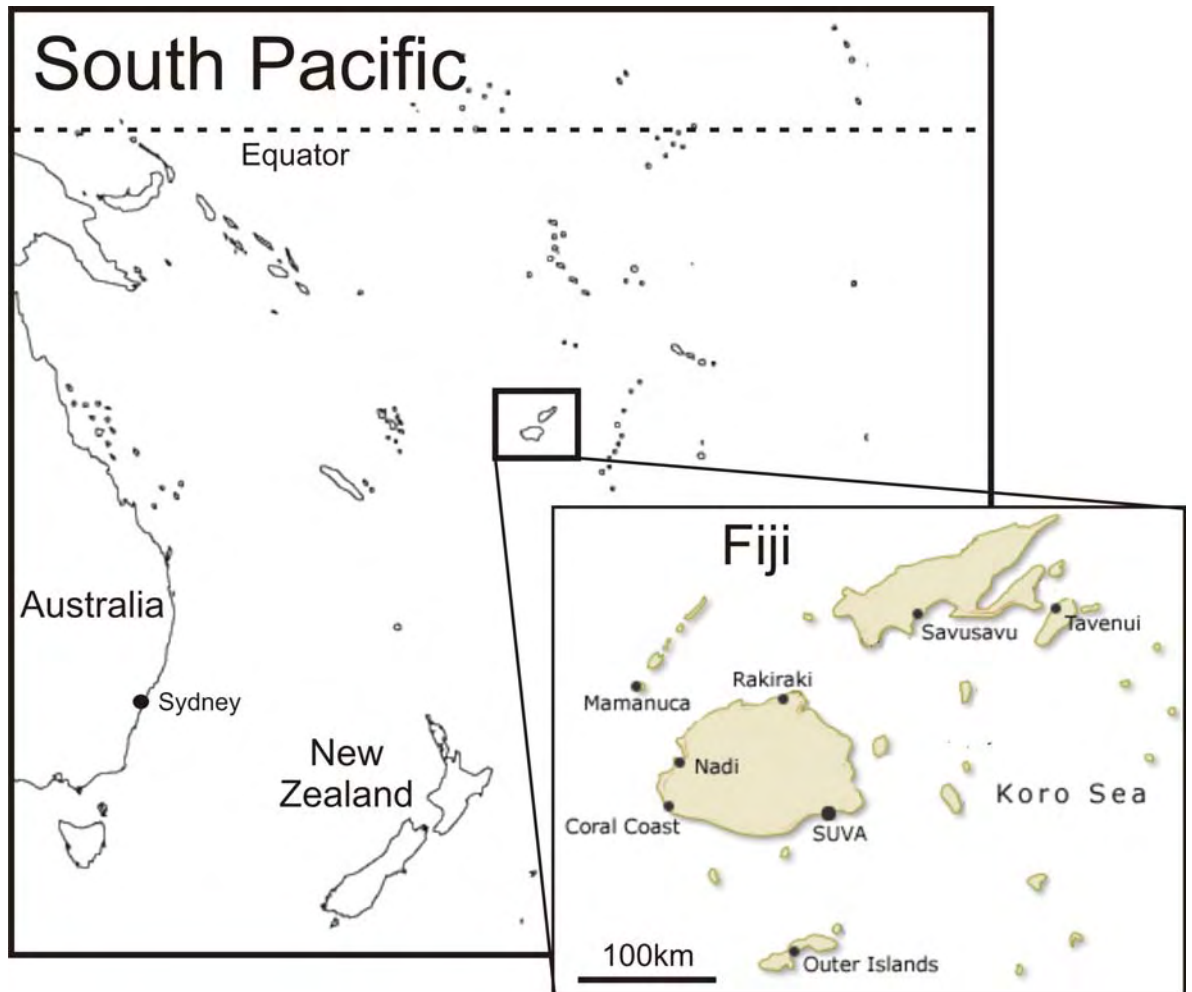
Abstract

This thesis presents a postcolonial critique of development and academic discourses in the context of the South Pacific. Focusing on Fiji's aid industry, I challenge the apparent inevitabilities underpinning an increasingly narrow and parochial donor 'good governance' agenda in the region. I also confront geography's sojourns in, and on, the 'Third World' laying bare a number of epistemological and methodological inconsistencies. Having exposed various definitional rigidities produced by these discourses, I emphasise the decentred and nuanced meanings and ways of envisioning 'development' enabled by postcolonial sensibilities.

The thesis has three primary aims. First, to highlight the constraining *and* enabling aspects of discourses. I emphasise the productive features of development discourse; its framing attributes, fragility and transformative potential, drawing on the activities and intentions of NGOs and donor organisations operating in Fiji. Second, I draw attention to the way 'identities' form and shape aid relations in the country. Again, utilising examples from Fiji's aid industry, I foreground the centrality of 'traditions', religion, gender and ethnicity in 'development' and critique their virtual silence in donor policies and programmes in the region. Finally, I 'unpack' the way academia intervenes in development settings. Here I suggest that any reflection on the relevance of research will inevitably involve taking methodology seriously and posing fundamental questions about why we are there in the first place.

Advocating more than a methodological revisionism, I argue that 'doing development differently' will involve reorienting development relations and embarking on a far-reaching mission to subvert development's self-evidence while proposing and supporting collaborative efforts that explore negotiated and newly emerging cultural forms.

Map of the South Pacific



Source: www.enchantedlearning.com

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Good governance is an essential precondition for sustainable development (AusAID, *Good Governance: Guiding principles for implementation*, 2000: 5).

[T]he overall goal of AusAID's engagement with Fiji has to do with reduction of poverty, ensuring equity and increasing stability...[and] that we maximise our efforts in that area (AusAID Representative, 2003).

The international community, particularly Australia, has a critical role to play [in the Pacific] through its aid program (AusAID, *Pacific Regional Aid Strategy*, 2004: 9).

This thesis contests the self-evidence assumed in these statements and challenges the manner in which the language and practices of development discourse, 'good governance' in this case, is produced and deployed. What produces such unerring beliefs and prescriptive claims? How are development officials afforded the status to speak so candidly? And what enables such certainty and paternalism? Following decades of development 'aid', and despite the changing language of development, the structures and institutions that sustain the aid industry carry on relatively unchanged, and indeed, with renewed neoliberal vigour. In fact, corporate involvement in 'aid' can be very good for business. Surely

some scepticism is warranted. But as I will contend, critique in itself is not enough and this is where the contribution of postcolonial studies lies in terms of understanding development's increasingly complex and subtle processes and in envisioning alternative ways of 'doing development'.

The contribution I signal here is itself contested. Christine Sylvester (1999) describes development studies and postcolonial studies as "...two giant islands of analysis and enterprise stak[ing] out a large part of the world and operat[ing] within it—or with respect to it—as if the other had a bad smell" (1999, 704). Sylvester (1999) suggests that the two fields ignore each other's missions, and while development studies tends not to listen to subaltern, postcolonial studies rarely concerns itself with whether the subaltern are eating. One of the objectives of this thesis is to identify points of convergence between these "disparate tales of the 'Third World'" (Sylvester, 1999: 703). In doing so, it aims to establish ways of reconciling development studies' concern with global inequality, resource distribution and poverty with postcolonialism's emphasis on language, difference and identity. Put another way, the thesis explores the various ways in which postcolonial criticism 'hits the ground' in the context of Fiji's development aid industry.

The timing of such an undertaking is pertinent. Concern over development geography's apparent failure to impact in any significant way on development theory or practice (Bebbington, 2003) and its demise in terms of its inability to

attract geographers to pursue careers in development-related topics (see Potter, 2001) has raised concerns about the decline and irrelevance. Similar concerns have been aired in relation to development geography in Australia. In an article in *Geographical Research*, Rugendyke (2005) draws on the personal narratives of three eminent Australian development geographers to reflect on the state of the sub-discipline in the country. The collective view is one of decline, a situation reflected in the 'tragic' death, according to John Connell (cited in Rugendyke, 2005), of the Development Studies Group of the Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG). Connell also describes his disappointment when recounting attendance levels at development-related sessions during the 2004 IAG in Adelaide.

Connell sees the demise as a result of recent post-modern reflections, wariness about academic imperialism and the emergence of self-criticism. With the focus moving to local issues and calls for local participation in development processes, there is a tendency to feel that to comment from afar is inappropriate. Connell also suggests the decline can be attributed to sustained decreases in university funding for overseas research. This view is shared by Harold Brookfield and David Lea who highlight the constraints imposed on research funding, especially in such a time-intensive area and one that rarely produces the quick outcomes required by an increasingly results-oriented academy (Rugendyke, 2005). One set of themes that emerge from the Rugendyke paper is that for development geography to retain its social relevance in Australia it must continue to focus on global inequalities and

how these impact at the local level. But also, importantly, development geography must speak to development practice.

In this thesis I suggest that post-modern reflections, a wariness of academic imperialism and the emergence of self-criticism need not deter potential development geographers. In fact, I will argue that Connell's apprehensions are critical attributes of a rejuvenated postcolonial development geography in this country and elsewhere. Moreover, the latter's social relevance, as I will argue, lies in its capacity to speak to development practice, global inequalities and their local impacts.

This relates to my next point, which has in its sights the epistemological and methodological orthodoxies held dear to economic geographer's sojourns in the area of development¹. Part of postcolonialism's critique, as Robinson (2003) has made clear, is to highlight "...the parochial nature of much of what still passes for universal theory in the Western academy" (2003, 273). Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2000) work, *Provincialising Europe*, is considered a major contribution in the way it challenges the theoretical concepts which frame much of Western scholarship. According to Chakrabarty (in Robinson, 2003), "Europe works as a silent referent", in which "Third-World historians feel a need to refer to works in European history [but] historians of Europe do not feel any need to reciprocate" (2003, 274-275; see

¹ Economic geography, and also to a lesser extent urban geography, are still to come to terms with their Euro-American centricism when dealing with the majority world (see Robinson, 2003). I return to this point at length in Chapter Six.

also Smith, 1999). Postcolonial perspectives emphasise the importance of representing people and places *across* cultures, traditions and contexts, but also, importantly, stress the difficulties of doing so (Blunt and Wills, 2002). Sidaway (2002), for example, argues that any postcolonial geography "...must realise within itself its own impossibility, given that geography is inescapably marked (both philosophically and institutionally) by its location and development as a western-colonial science" (2002, 11). Despite the emergence of postcolonial and feminist critiques over the past decade, colonising research remains the dominant mode of cross-cultural research in geography today. As Stevens (cited in Howitt and Stevens, 2005) have recently stated:

[c]olonial research reflects and reinforces domination and exploitation through the attitudes and differential power embodied in its research relationships with 'others', its dismissal of their rights and knowledge, its intrusive and non-participatory methodologies, and often also in its goals and in its use of research findings (2005, 32).

Given the persistence of these epistemological and methodological orthodoxies, it then becomes rather urgent, particularly in the context of development geography, to pursue decolonising frames of reference and research practices. Several geographers have recently identified what might be involved in such an undertaking. Blunt and Wills (2002), for example, suggest that this will entail both challenging geography's ethnocentric tendencies and writing postcolonial

geographies that focus on people and places that have been marginalised in representations of the world (Blunt and Wills, 2000 especially 167 - 181). Similarly, Howitt and Stevens (2005) state that decolonising research would attempt to use the research process and subsequent findings to dismantle the "...cross-cultural discourses, asymmetrical power relationships, representations, and political, economic, and social structures through which colonialism and neocolonialism are constructed and maintained" (2005, 32).

The following sections in this introduction provide the context within which the themes identified so far; contesting development's self-evidence, the need for something more productive between development studies and postcolonial studies, and the call for a socially relevant and decolonised development geography, are located. First, I give a general summary of the primary tenets and criticisms of the more established narratives of development before introducing, in more detail, several of the terms and ideas of development's 'newcomer', postcolonial critique. I then give an initial indication of the way my 'reading' of development intervention in the South Pacific and Fiji aims to contribute to other literature; namely, earlier regional, neo-Marxist, 'culturalist' and more recent feminist, environmental and postdevelopment accounts. Following this, I give a précis of Fiji's emerging 'coup cycle' followed by an introduction to the country's aid industry. Having contextualised the latter as it tries to negotiate ongoing political instability, I then consider the methods and methodology of the research. In the penultimate section

I outline the thesis aims before concluding with an explanation of the parts that make up the thesis and a summary of each of the chapters.

1.1 THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Given the primary target of this thesis is the ‘good governance agenda’, I first want to highlight the progression of thinking behind this latest version of development discourse. It needs to be kept in mind at the outset that evolutionary notions of progress and the predominance of economic growth has provided the backdrop to the various incarnations of the present good governance agenda (see also Chapter Two). The ‘Washington Consensus’, for example, emerged in the 1980s as a reply to the weak economic performance of Keynesianism-inspired state interventionism of the 1970s (Önis and Şenses, 2003). This consensus, which embraced a set of economic policies based on fiscal discipline, was underpinned by neoliberalism’s absolute faith in the market. It included tax reforms, trade and foreign direct investment liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation, interest rate liberalisation, competitive exchange rates and secure property rights (Williamson, 1993). For developing countries, this raft of prescriptive interventionist policies became a condition of ‘aid’ the expression of which was a range of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). While these measures were embraced by elites in these countries; stretching throughout Africa, parts of Asia and the Pacific, their effects in relation to their prescribed aims proved devastating (Abrahamsen, 2000). And while staunch supporters of the ‘Washington Consensus’ blamed SAP’s failures on the countries themselves, concerns emerged even among its main exponents

and by the late 1980s and early 1990s a revised version was underway (Abrahamsen, 2000; Önis and Şenses, 2003; Stiglitz, 1998).

The 'Post-Washington Consensus' aimed to address the failures of its predecessor, in large part blamed on 'poor governance' and fragility of peace and conflict in developing countries. For international institutions such as the IMF, WTO and WB, it soon became evident that fiscal discipline and 'getting the prices right' to encourage competitive markets could not be achieved—according to the dictates of the Post-Washington Consensus—without propping up state institutions and initiating democratic governance. Hence the twin goals of economic liberalism and liberal democracy emerged in the 1990s as the essential ingredients of global 'good governance' policies. During this time too, and typified by the priorities of the newly elected Bush administration, 'rogue' states seen to be resistant to the good governance agenda were vilified and isolated. The events of 9/11 in 2001 and the subsequent 'war of terrorism' only added to the spectre of the Post-Washington position. The desirability of this consensus and acceptance of its overarching tenets; infused with the additional texturing of global terrorism, remains dominant. Indeed, as Abrahamsen (2000, x) declares, "...it is legitimate to speak of the existence of a development discourse that donors and creditors in the North all subscribe to and advocate as the model to be followed by the South".

These appeals to democratise political institutions together with applying broad-based growth, private sector investment and market competitiveness also continue

to direct and underpin donor aid strategies in the South Pacific (ADB, 2004; AusAID, 2004; World Bank, 2005). For those societies 'left behind', or not conforming to the scriptures of good governance or the broader neoliberal mantra, they are declared 'failed state' (Bilgin and Morton, 2002; Doty, 1996), or in the case of the South Pacific, handed the unflattering title 'arc of instability' (Connell, 2007b). Critics of neoliberalism argue that this branding is paternalistic and unhelpful. First, it is thought that such labelling masks the *undemocratic* features of the main proponents of liberal democracy—'Western' governments and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (Abrahamsen, 2000). Second, through its oppositional delineations, between a 'failed' (them) and 'strong' (us), alternative notions of development or society are "...silenced to the point almost of disappearing from memory" (Peet with Hartwick, 1999: 197). Third, critics suggest that the effects of these dichotomous representations for people in the majority² *and* minority world are to maintain the supposed dissimilarities (between 'them' and 'us') and in doing so reinforce the visions of those living in the majority world as a beleaguered, powerless and 'objectified other' (Power, 2003 esp. 231 and 232; see also Myers, 2001). Critics argue that given the persistence of this apparent 'failed status' or 'instability', and despite decades of development 'assistance', the focus perhaps should be, as Bilgin and Morton (2002, 75) maintain, on the "failed 'universalisation' of the 'imported state' within the post-colonial world". In other

² 'Majority world' (Potter, 2001) is used here to describe countries or areas of the world that contain the *majority* of the world's population. Though the label itself draws on a binary, it is useful in that it avoids the hierarchy that define other references (i.e., First World/Third World or developed/developing).

words, the ‘double fantasies’ of economic liberalism and liberal democracy should not be so unproblematically adopted (Cramer and Goodhand, 2002).

Meanwhile, the socialist imaginary (Watts, 2000), or the idea of democratic socialism, continues to explicate the contemporary relevance of Marxism. Indeed, its main proponents intend to illustrate the “...rich complexity of structural necessity and contingent freedoms, so that historical events fit into contradictory structures, yet result also from local, specific actions” (Peet with Hartwick, 1999: 122). Though these post-Marxist contributions contain useful insight (see Kiely, 1999) there seems to be, as Corbridge (1998) declares, “...few takers now for a socialist alternative to capitalism” (1998, 138; see also Slater, 2002)³. Certainly, the perceived association with the political dinosaur represented by the former Soviet Union (Peet with Hartwick, 1999)—contentions often made by economists and conservative politicians—have not helped the socialist democratic cause. More familiar attacks on Marxism’s ‘economism’, ‘teleology’ (Booth, 1985, 1994; Slater, 2002) and ‘state-centric’ orientation have persisted where criticisms often centre on the apparent inadequacy of Marxist interpretations outside European societies⁴ (see Meleisea, 1987: esp. 150 - 152).

Typified by Sach’s (1992) *The Development Dictionary*, early postdevelopment represented a complete denunciation of development. With talk of obituaries,

³ Though declaring this to be the case in “[t]hese strange times in development studies” (1998, 138), I gather Corbridge would still classify as one of these few takers (see Corbridge, 2001 on the contemporary relevance of intellectual traditions including Marxist political economy).

cracks and delusions, authors in the collection urged that we abandon our faith in development in order to “...liberate the imagination” (Sach, 1992: 2). For Esteva (1992) development represented entrapment, while for Escobar (1992) and Rahnema (1992) development was rendered insidious and manipulative. Given such a fundamental reproach, these initial examples of postdevelopment received virulent criticism throughout the 1990s⁵. First, these theorists were criticised for portraying development as a “monolithic hegemony” (Peet, 1998: 77; see Pieterse, 2000; Pottier, 1997) constituting an omnipotent ‘Western’ power working over non-Western peoples, irrespective of time and place. The concern here is that by depicting an ‘evil’ West poisoning a ‘noble’ Third World (Kiely, 1999), the binaries reminiscent of neoliberalism are unproblematically reversed. Second, consistent criticism of postdevelopment has centred on its celebration of ‘tradition’ and new social movements (Kiely, 1999; Watts and McCarthy, 1997). By romanticising ‘soil cultures’ (Corbridge, 1998), postdevelopment prioritises indigenous knowledges representing them as somehow more ‘organic’ than scientific knowledge systems (Hobart, 1993; see also Briggs and Sharpe, 2004). In presenting idyllic notions of ‘community’ or indigenous knowledges, the local level is presented as an incorruptible and harmonious site of social relations (see Mohan, 1999). This consensual representation, critics argue, masks the patriarchal structures and ethnic conflicts that exist within Third World communities. In terms of the

⁴ Though, dependency theorists would strongly argue to the contrary.

⁵ I distinguish between ‘early’ postdevelopment (in the early 1990s) to subsequent work by these and other authors writing in the quick-moving field of early 2000s postdevelopment (see further below esp., McGregor, 2007; McKinnon, 2007; Simon, 2007).

idealisation of new social movements or civil society⁶, similar romanticism (to that shown toward 'tradition') tends to silence the potential for *oppositional* grassroots initiatives. Indeed, 'inventive self-reliance' within civil society could, in fact, facilitate conflict *amongst* the subaltern. Another set of criticisms fix on the 'linguistic turn' in development studies and the apparent over use of discourse analysis in postdevelopment accounts. It is argued that excessive attention to discursive aspects of development focuses attention away from the 'materiality' of social problems and the real successes of development in the post-WW2 period (Corbridge, 1999). Peet with Hartwick (1999) go further, arguing that postdevelopment critiques end in a "nihilistic never-never land, where nothing is proposed, and little gets done in anything approaching real terms" (1999: 199).

But despite these ardent claims rejecting early postdevelopment accounts, more recent incarnations have emerged that recast the discussion towards multifarious nodes of analysis including those of a postcolonial bent (Cupples *et al* 2007; Curry, 2003; Gibson-Graham, 2005; McGregor, 2007; McKinnon, 2006; 2007). While not a significant point made in this thesis, recent postdevelopment and postcolonial criticism have converged, or perhaps more accurately, the former has shed its earlier narcissism opting to embrace new emancipatory points of reference (McKinnon, 2007). For example, Cupples *et al* (2007)—ala postcolonialism (see

⁶ Civil Society is used in this thesis to include non-government organisations, community-based organisations or any organisation that is not part of government. There is considerable and ongoing debate over whether the private sector should be included in definitions of civil society. As these debates are outside the confines of the thesis I will elaborate on the specific use of the term as intended by the user or organisation.

further 1.2)—refer to the ‘hybrid cultures’ of postdevelopment where new social alliances are reimagining, rearticulating and refashioning development discourse. I return to this ‘renewed’ postdevelopmentalism in 1.4 when describing Pacific-based analyses, and again in the final chapter of the thesis as I draw together key themes.

1.2 INTRODUCING POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Having hinted at the possibilities enabled by a postcolonial approach and briefly identified current debates in development studies above, I now introduce some of the key aspects and terms used in postcolonial theory; namely, binary thinking, hybridity, difference and identity. First though, a brief introduction to what is usually meant by postcolonialism.

Some of the difficulties in defining postcolonial theory stem from its often complex elaborations. While its initial meaning was as a chronological marker following the Second World War, it is no longer limited to a simple temporal reference as *after* colonialism or *after* independence (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995). Moving beyond these earlier uses, more recent discussions involve the way postcolonial studies challenge the production of knowledges that are exclusively western and ethnocentric. According to Young (1990), postcolonialism not only focuses on the world beyond ‘the West’ but also disrupts what is understood by and taken for granted in the term ‘West’ (see below Said, 1978; 1989). Postcolonialism has also engendered critical perspectives on the legacies of colonialism and the

contestation of colonial domination (Loomba, 1998), while raising questions regarding the ways in which the 'coloniser' and 'colonised' are mutually constituted (Power, 2003). It is through such means that postcolonialism intends to highlight the potentialities of agency (Blunt and McEwan, 2002) and efforts to transform dominant discourses in ways which give societies control over their own futures (Ashcroft, 2001). By recovering the subject position of the subaltern (Abrahamsen, 2003) and highlighting their many hybrid formations (Bhabha, 1994), postcolonialism provides "...a much needed corrective to the Eurocentrism of much writing on development" (McEwan, 2001: 130).

One of the key terms and ways of conceptualising in postcolonial theory is through the interrogation of binary opposites. Though rarely acknowledged (see Yapa, 2002 for one exception), binary thinking was a technique originally advanced by Derrida (1976 [1967]; 1978; 1982) and subsequently used by a range of theorists including postcolonial writers. Through a close reading of major philosophical and literary works, Derrida showed that the text can be shown to be saying something quite different from that intended by the author (Bullock *et al*, 1988). Indeed, the text can be shown to be telling its own story and saying many different things, "...some of which subtly subvert the conscious intentions of the writer" (Bullock *et al*, 1988: 206). One such 'subtle subversion' is revealed through the author's use of the binary opposition. Metaphysical thought, according to Derrida (1982), installed various hierarchies or orders of subordination which always privileges one side of

an opposition and denigrates or marginalises the alternative term of that opposition. In short, the privileged term is constituted by what it suppresses.

Several postcolonial writers have deployed this binary technique and developed its use in other contexts. Bhabha's (1994) conceptualisation of hybridity is one such example. For Bhabha, hybridity serves to break down the binary oppositions that have been relied upon to justify colonialism (Bhabha, 1994) and continue to be used under various guises to maintain and legitimise development intervention (see below). Though Bhabha has been notable for his formulations in terms of hybridity, it is Said's (1978) *Orientalism* that provided the seminal example of Derridean oppositionality in the context of postcolonial theory. In it Said (1978) focused on the West's 'imaginative geographies' about the Orient and how the latter were represented as exotic, inferior and irrational as against a 'normal', superior and rational 'West'. Drawing on Said (1978), Smith's (1999) articulation of difference is also a useful illustration of this Derridean technique. Using examples of imperialism, colonialism and nationalism, Smith (1999) asserts that these modern projects were (and continue to be) reliant upon *difference* being taken for granted and routinely reproduced. It would have been impossible, she argues, for colonial powers to exploit slave labour in order to expand their own economies and control the world map if "the *difference* between European 'selves' and colonised 'others' had not been firmly established in the public mind" (1999, 129 emphasis added; see also Ashcroft, 2001). For Smith (1999), it is difference which casts social and spatial categories, divisions between places and peoples, as 'natural'

and therefore unproblematised. Hybridity helps expose social difference as a construction with the result being that difference is no longer regarded as an essential characteristic, “fixed by one’s time and place of birth” (Smith, 1999:130). In other words, identities are continuously shaped and reshaped (Hall, 1993). In such a world of constant cultural borrowings (Said, 1993) “...there can be no pure or unsullied identity, no essential opposition between the coloniser and the colonised” (Bhabha in Abrahamsen, 2003: 205), between ‘the modern’ and ‘the traditional’, ‘West’ and ‘East’, ‘Self’ and ‘Other’.

1.3 POSTCOLONIALISM: A MULTIFARIOUS READING OF DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION IN THE PACIFIC AND FIJI⁷

In this section, I give a brief account of early post-WW2 explanations of change in the Pacific including regional, neo-Marxist, ‘culturalist’, and more recent feminist, environmental and postdevelopment perspectives⁸. I then indicate what this thesis might add to the literature in terms of thinking differently about development aid relations. Particularly in that, to date, there has been very few extensive studies undertaken on NGO, donor and civil society activities in Fiji (though see Ali, 1999; Fernando, 1996; Singh, 1994; Swain, 1999), especially in terms of a distinct postcolonial approach. Importantly, I am not claiming that such a position replaces these other explanations of change in the Pacific, but that postcolonial critique

⁷ With the exception of early regional approaches, I am largely interested in those narratives that were not dominant at the time i.e., that were largely a response to modernisation and neo-liberal approaches (see above 1.1). I discuss the latter at length in Chapter Two by way of considering the density of contemporary development discourse.

offers an additional inclusive, nuanced and flexible understanding of what has become an increasingly complex and subtle set of processes. First though, I start by introducing the ways that other narratives have, and continue to, explain development processes in the Pacific, particularly those advanced by geographers.

Many of the early regional works on the Pacific, particularly the South Pacific, take a descriptive approach and give equal attention to both the geographical features of the region and the human aspects found there. This dual focus often evoked forms of environmental determinism (Oliver, 1951) and frequently depicted the role of the scholar in rather heroic and explorative terms. The following excerpt provides a good example of the direction these surveys of the South Pacific took at the time.

None of the world's oceans casts such a glamour of adventure over us as the Pacific...this vast depression in the earth's crust [formed] when the semi-liquid moon was torn from the earth-mass...is one great field for inquiry and speculation. Turning from the problems of the changing earth to those of changing human life in the Pacific, we find an even wider field awaiting investigation (Wood and McBride, 1946:1)

⁸ This introduction is not intended as a comprehensive summary of all approaches. Rather, I want to introduce some of the ways that authors, particularly but not exclusively development geographers have written about and contextualised development in the Pacific.

In terms of regional geography in the decades following the Second World War, the themes of localised diversity, human ecology and migration figured prominently. The influential study by Oskar Spate (1959) and subsequent inauguration of the 'Brookfield School' during the 1960s and 1970s (headed by Harold Brookfield), led to a significant number of geographers pursuing research in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and elsewhere in the region (Brookfield and Brown, 1963; Ward, 1965; Lea, 1969; Clarke, 1971; Waddell, 1972; Brookfield, 1973; Bedford, 1973; Lea, *et al*, 1975; Connell, 1979, 1980). Several features characterised many of these early examples of development geography. First, at a time when geographers elsewhere continued the descriptive tradition or pursued quantification and statistical methods of explanation (Waddell, 1997 cited in Rugendyke, 2005 referring to North American geography; see also Johnston, 1991), Australian geographers were involved in their own distinct micro-studies (Lea cited in Rugendyke, 2005) focusing on, among other things, customary land tenure systems, social organisation and the significance of migration (Overton, 1993). There was also an overtly applied and interdisciplinary focus adopted in many of these studies (Connell, 1988). Reflecting links with anthropology, a number of works stressed the importance of observing interaction at the local scale (Brookfield, 1984) and close inspection of 'life's realities' in villages (Lea, 1969; 1973). As John Connell states, these works captured the essence of "the bare-foot school of geography" (Connell cited in Rugendyke, 2005: 309). Connell was also instrumental, along with several others (Bedford, 1973, 1981 ; Bonnemaïson, 1977), in the study of the processes of migration, both between countries in the Pacific, but also on the issue of

continued mobility and circulation of ideas, resources and people between village and city (Chapman cited in Rugendyke, 2005).

Another school of thought in Australian development geography which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s was Marxian and neo-Marxian explanations of developmental change. Connell (1988, see also Overton, 1993) provides a useful account of the main themes developed within this framework. According to Connell (1988), Marxism filled the theoretical void that characterised a number of earlier regional works, primarily those emphasising the Pacific's uniqueness. This shift toward a consideration of international capital and labour linked processes found in the region to those experienced elsewhere in the 'Third World'. One strand of neo-Marxism was dependency theory, which focused on core-periphery relations and global integration (Britton, 1982; Sofer, 1988; McGee, 1976; Taylor, 1984, 1986). These works primarily emphasised the penetration of international capital into Pacific production systems and the subsequent negative effects on the Pacific. The studies involved, for example, exposed the high level of 'leakage' of tourism revenue overseas, altered food consumption patterns toward greater dependency on imported foods, and the way the 'periphery' is actively exploited by the 'core' in terms of transport and migration (Overton, 1993). A second strand of neo-Marxism concerned socio-economic differentiation and involved considering the way capitalist exploitation led to and exacerbated landlessness and poverty (Howlett, 1980; Connell, 1979; Curtain, 1984; Fahey, 1986; Overton, 1989). These scholars emphasised the emergence of rural classes, the economic basis of social

organisational change and broadly understood differentiation as a complex and variable process.

A third grouping of narratives of the Pacific, which have more recently emerged in development debates, despite a long lineage within some Pacific literature, is that of 'culturalist', feminist, environmental and postdevelopment explanations of developmental change. While the themes associated in these accounts are quite diverse, and sometimes conflictual, there are at least two features that can be distinguished. First, and most importantly, these accounts are largely produced by Pacific Islanders themselves and others living in the region who have experienced at close hand the effects of 'development' (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1994; Gegeo, 1998, 2001; Griffin, 1994; Hau'ofa, 2000; Maiava, 2001, 2002; Meleisea, 1987; Ravuvu, 1991; Smith, 1999; Emberson-Bain, 1994; Scheyvens, 1995; Slatter, 1994; Thaman, 1994, 2003). Many of these accounts tell of the destructive nature of external forces, both physically and psychologically, but also contain a myriad of locally contextualised stories of survival and local agency. Second, and following on from the previous point, there is a rather cynical account of the 'West', 'the outsider' and democracy reflected in these views. One such explanation is the culturalist position, which sometimes finds expression as the 'foreign flower' argument. According to this approach, democracy and equal rights are set in contrast to loyalty, obedience and local traditions. In this case, democracy and human rights invariably undermine the collective value systems of indigenous communities (Takiveikata, 2000 cited in Robertson and Sutherland, 2001). In more

extreme versions of the 'foreign flower' position, non-indigenous peoples are intelligibly marked as foreigner or *vulagi*, with very specific and circumscribed (and unwanted) personal characteristics with little or nothing to contribute (Ravuvu, 1991, esp. 60 – 81).

In an important contribution to Feminist scholarship in the Pacific, Emberson-Bain's (1994) edited collection established a wide ranging critique of development intervention in the region. Focusing on a number of topics including mining, fisheries, agriculture, aid, migration, tourism and politics, the book highlighted the extent of gender inequality evident in these industries and spheres of daily life. The collection also identified links between gender inequality and environmental issues, which were further developed in the late 1990s along with an emphasis on women's 'double day' i.e., the expectations placed on them in being required to pursue waged work while also undertaking reproductive roles before and after work hours (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1994, 2000; Griffin, 1994; Scheyvens, 1999). Environmental advocacy has been the topic of another group of scholars and activists concerned with the Pacific Islands as they face increasing environmental impacts. Not only has there been concern in terms of gradual depletion of natural resources through unsustainable practices, but also the physical threat to livelihoods, especially in low lying islands and atolls (Kabutaulaka, 2000; Samou, 1999; Scheyvens and Cassells, 1999; Veitayaki, 2000). A number of local pro-environmental responses, in the form of NGO and CBO activities, have targeted

Pacific and other governments and corporate irresponsibility (see Connell and Howitt, 1991; Howitt *et al*, 1996; Teaiwa *et al*, 2002).

The final approach I consider is postdevelopment literature on the Pacific⁹. These writings, while less deterministic and personalised than the culturalist position, are no less suspicious of development processes (Maiava, 2002; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Maiava's (2002) example of a postdevelopment position questions the presupposition that underpins development discourse in the first place. Her critique of development is that the latter should not be circumscribed or initiated by the development 'expert' accompanied by 'terms of reference' and donor guidelines, but should be generated from the communities themselves. Maiava's objection is with the mis-guided assumption that the expert invariably 'knows best'. In a similar vein, though more forcefully put, Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) critique of research 'on' indigenous peoples is a striking rebuttal of colonising methodologies. While Maiava's (2002) concern is with the development 'expert' and the underlying assumptions that steer their work, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) targets the epistemological basis from which non-indigenous researchers undertake their craft, often with disempowering effects. It is the destructive consequences for indigenous communities, and Maori in New Zealand, in particular, that occupy Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) deliberations.

⁹ While labeling these as 'postdevelopment approaches' they constitute a less stringent and rejectionist position such as that put forward by Rist (1997), Sach (1992) and Rahnema (1997). Also, I acknowledge that Maiava and Tuhiwai Smith may not subscribe to my 'labeling' of them as postdevelopment writers. It is more the thrust of their relative positions that suggest this general categorisation.

Reflecting the kinds of multidisciplinary goals identified in 1.2, work by Curry (2003), Gibson-Graham (2005) and McGregor (2007) represent good examples of an emerging 'emancipatory' postdevelopment in the Pacific. Still suspicious of the thrust of the development canon, these authors stress indigenous strategies that aim to re-invigorate the early hope of development by appropriating or using aspect of it—whether programmes, inclinations or desires—for their own purposes. For Curry (2003), this involves emphasising the way rural communities in Papua New Guinea empower themselves by creatively recasting development initiatives. In the case of Gibson-Graham (2005) and her work on NGOs in the Philippines, indentured and quasi-enslaved migrant workers refashion themselves anew by becoming investors and entrepreneurs in community ventures thus creating economic independence. Similarly, McGregor (2007) highlights local micro-scale initiatives in Timor-Leste that simultaneously dismantle the physical and discursive hegemony of development while opening "...new socio-political spaces in which local imaginaries can be enacted and empowered" (2007, 161).

How then does postcolonial criticism, informed by the kinds of sensibilities identified earlier (in 1.2), contribute to the extensive and diverse collection of critical studies and writings on the Pacific identified above? And, what might this thesis add to thinking differently about development aid relations in the Pacific and Fiji specifically? As a "...multifarious mode of analysis..." (Abrahamsen, 2003: 197) postcolonialism draws on a number of political and philosophical traditions and

conceptual resources. Unrestricted by theoretical dogmas, postcolonial critique can work between the often antagonistic positions represented in the above writings and provides a more nuanced account of development relations¹⁰.

For instance, this thesis is attuned to the regional tradition of conducting micro-studies focusing on social organisation and circulation of ideas, resources and peoples, though is wary of failing to draw connections between the local scale and global processes. It is sympathetic to the concerns raised by Marxist analyses in terms of capitalism's exploitative effects and how this exacerbates poverty, yet maintains a critical view of Marxian economism and teleology. This thesis also draws heavily on the fundamental critiques provoked by postdevelopment and pursued to varying degrees within feminist and environmental literature, but remains critical of its own silencing effects and essentialisms¹¹. There is also running through the study a distinct refusal to deny development's normative appeals for a better life for all but remains critical of the way it is often being done through universal appeals, such as those saturating neoliberal versions of the present and future. It is the normalising effects of this neoliberal (development) discourse; its language and the institutional sites from which these languages and concepts are generated that is a target in this study. More important though, it is the possibility of attaining something different, something less prescriptive and unconditional, that is of particular interest. The main proposition developed in this

¹⁰ Though, as I stated above, more recent postdevelopment work have commonalities with postcolonial criticism.

¹¹ I am referring here to 'early' postdevelopment.

thesis is that postcolonial critique provides such possibilities and my contribution attempts to add something new on this account.

1.4 FIJI'S EMERGING 'COUP CYCLE'

Another important backdrop to the research was the now evident 'coup cycle' in Fiji (Jalal, 2002; Yabaki, 2007). Four coups in the past 20 years¹² has had a debilitating effect on the country; socially, politically and economically. Addressing an Asia-Pacific Development Review Conference in June 2006, Robbie Robertson's¹³ opening passage was eerily prophetic:

Most of us are aware that Fiji has faced considerable political instability ever since its first military coups back in 1987. And it would seem, perhaps only to some of us, that many of the issues raised by the coups of 1987 and 2000 have yet to be adequately addressed in ways that enable a more inclusive, united and forward looking community; hence they continue to dominate the political landscape and possess the potential to create further instability (Robertson, 2006: 1).

Less than six months later on the 5th December, 2006 Fiji's fourth coup was enacted by Commodore Frank Bainimarama. As Robertson (2006) indicates,

¹² Two occurred in 1987 followed thirteen years later in May 2000. The latest coup unfolded in early December 2006.

¹³ Robbie is the Professor and Director of Development Studies at USP's Laclua Campus in Suva.

political instability has an identifiable history¹⁴. Given the contextual importance of the coups for my thesis, I now very briefly summarise the circumstances surrounding these events and highlight the ‘issues’ to which Robertson (2006) refers.

Fiji’s first coup occurred on the 14th May, 1987 when the then Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka seized control of the country with the backing of Fiji’s Military Forces. While several commentators emphasise the economic and class aspects of events, ethnicity played a crucial role in Rabuka’s removal of the democratically elected Dr Timoci Bavadra (Connell, 2007a). Five weeks earlier, Dr Bavadra led the Fiji Labour Party (in coalition with the National Federation Party) to become Fiji’s second Prime Minister. Though himself an Indigenous Fijian, Dr Bavadra’s political ideals, according to the Fijian establishment and key elements within the military, represented a threat to ‘Fijian traditions’ and ultimately to the paramountcy of indigenous interests (Ratuva, 2002). Dr Bavadra embraced collectivity, which among other things, fostered Indo-Fijian/ Indigenous Fijian relations. He also fervently declared his intentions to put an end to the politics of race and fear which he asserted summed up the existing Fijian establishment (Bain and Baba, 1990). For example, in his opening Labour Party address in July 1985, Dr Bavadra referred to the “...narrow interests...” and “...undemocratic features...” of political parties currently dominating political life in Fiji (Bavadra in Robertson and Sutherland, 2001: 80).

¹⁴ In 5.4 I trace some of this history back to Hamilton Arthur Gordon, Fiji’s first governor.

These sentiments and his eventual electoral victory incensed Fijian nationalists, who, despite the election results, were calling for the return to power for Fijians (Ratuva, 2002). Advocates of the Fijian establishment also pointed to what they considered a numerical imbalance between Indo-Fijians and Indigenous Fijians (by 1986 the former stood at 48.7 percent, the latter 46.6 percent) as a way of arousing fear among the Fijian population. The coup that ensued was the first of two in 1987. The second came about in September when Rabuka interpreted the Deuba Accord, an agreement designed to establish a Bavadra-Mara¹⁵ government of national unity, as an affront to his May 14 objectives. To the military-backed Rabuka and his supporters, Bavadra "...was still seen as a political 'front-man' for Indo-Fijians" (Ratuva, 2002: 5).

Though a so-called 'civilian coup' (Fraenkel, 2000), the May 2000 putsch saw disorder on an unparalleled scale, particularly in Suva. Indo-Fijian families and properties were targeted as Indigenous Fijians roamed areas of the country with self-declared impunity (Lal, 2000; Robertson and Sutherland, 2001). Events unfolded on the morning of the 19th May as seven armed gunmen headed by George Speight stormed the parliament and held the government hostage for 56 days (Lal, 2007). Significantly, these actions coincided with the first anniversary of the election of the Mahendra Chaudhry-led Labour government to office. But unlike the 1987 coup, Speight and his followers acted without the support of the Fijian

¹⁵ Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara was Fiji's first Prime Minister in 1970.

establishment (Lal, 2000), the military or the police force (Fraenkel, 2000). As Robertson and Sutherland (2001) have said, the 2000 coup had an additional Indigenous Fijian dimension, the effects of which, according to Lal (2000), fostered “...Fijian political fragmentation on an unprecedented scale” (2000, 281). But like the 1987 coups, the language of Speight mimicked that of Rabuka¹⁶, particularly when aligning indigenous traditions with Christianity as a way of excluding any ‘natural’ place for Indo-Fijian voice in the country¹⁷.

Confirming Robertson’s (2006) concerns (above), the causes of the December 2006 coup stemmed from unresolved issues following the May 2000 putsch. According to coup instigator Bainimarama, and in highly emotive and obscure terms, action was justified on the basis that the Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase was “unable to make decisions to [save] our¹⁸ people from destruction” (Bainimarama cited in Yabaki, 2007). Specifically, Bainimarama was referring to the introduction of certain Bills to parliament, one of which involved granting amnesty to several of the perpetrators of the May 2000 coup. While these measures by Qarase were certainly contentious and did little to allow the people of Fiji to resolve their own anguish following the events of 2000, Bainimarama’s military incursion had other possible origins. Following his return to Australia, Andrew Hughes, Fiji’s former Commissioner of Police, suggested that Bainimarama’s actions could be explained due to his possible implication in the

¹⁶ Which, I would add, was again continued under Qarase’s leadership.

¹⁷ I consider these issues at length in 5.2.

¹⁸ The ‘Indigenous Fijian’.

alleged beating to death of two rebel soldiers in the aftermath of a mutiny at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks on the 2nd November 2000 (Yabaki, 2007). Despite subsequent allegations and counter-allegations, political instability at the time of writing remains the unfortunate status quo in the country¹⁹.

1.5 INTRODUCING FIJI'S AID INDUSTRY

Having established the broader developmental and political context within which Fiji's aid industry is placed I would like to give a sense of the kinds of development organisations operating in the country and identify some of the issues and concerns that confront these organisations. In particular, I focus on the NGO community and briefly highlight their negotiation of the emerging coup cycle (see further *'In Your Words' – anecdotes and reflections from Fiji's NGO communities*; appendix item 5. Abbreviated to *In Your Words* for the remainder of the thesis). This discussion will provide an apt backdrop to the following section which presents the methods used and the methodologies that underpinned the study.

As identified in 1.1, the good governance agenda, with its twin goals of economic liberalism and liberal democracy, is the latest version of development discourse adopted by bilateral and multilateral institutions operating throughout the South Pacific (ADB, 2004; AusAID, 2004; World Bank, 2005). The development areas receiving the largest portion of financial assistance through these institutions include: law and justice, peace and conflict, economic reform and governance,

¹⁹ Contributing to these tensions were long-held inter-country regional factors (for example, see

trade development assistance, education and training, health, gender, environment, capacity building, infrastructure, human rights and poverty reduction (AusAID, 2004). While a significant proportion of development assistance is channelled through regional governments, bilaterals are increasingly targeting particular NGOs—whether regional or country-specific—to implement aspects of their programmes. In terms of Fiji’s NGO community, organisations such as The Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI), Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECREA), South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology and Environment (SPACHEE), National Council of Women (NCW), Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC), Fiji Women’s Rights Movement (FWRM), Reproductive and Family Health Association of Fiji (RFHAF) and Save the Children – Fiji (SCF) are funded through various bilateral funding streams. There are also NGOs such as the Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW) and RFHAF who are solely or partly funded through other international NGOs, often those affiliated to the organisation.

A primary reason for this more targeted aid funding is that donors such as AusAID, NZAID, CIDA, DFID and the EU have acknowledged, certainly in the case of Fiji, that NGOs are often more adept to local conditions and generally have particular expertise and stronger links with communities than do government departments

(AusAID Representative, 2002; Development Practitioner, 2002)²⁰. Given this, donors fund a range of development programmes from basic service delivery in health and education to more diverse advocacy-based and institutional support in areas including gender equity, capacity building, youth issues, human rights, the environment, employment and constitutional legislative reforms (see further Chapter Three on NGOs and civil society). Recognising the utility of NGOs as implementing agents is also consistent with current donor attention on ‘aid effectiveness’ as an emerging theme in development assistance policy (Gallus, 2004; *Development Bulletin No. 65*, 2004).

Adding to the divergent and emerging roles that NGOs play in Fiji is the apparent necessity to function in an ongoing atmosphere of political uncertainty. The limited adherence to the rule of law by the country’s governing elite continues to impact on the ability of NGOs to undertake their work while simultaneously emphasising the vital role these organisations play during times of crisis. According to one AusAID official, following the 2000 coup and with the Australian and other donor governments limiting their engagement with the Fijian administration, NGOs “...became quite [an] important means of actually getting assistance out to the rural areas...” (AusAID Representative, 2002). Indeed, in the months after May 2000, NGOs became key players in community development programmes as donors redirected substantial amounts of funds away from the Fiji government choosing

²⁰ While a significant critique of NGOs emerged in the 1990s (Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Van Rooy, 1998) their potential to bring about positive change for communities remains (see 6.4).

instead to support NGO activities (Barr, ECREA, Interview 1: 2002). In effect, political instability in the country has further enhanced donor-NGO collaboration.

In terms of negotiating the coup cycle in Fiji, NGOs, bilaterals and multilaterals find themselves in a tenuous position. At times of heightened tension, such as immediately following the 2000 and 2006 coups, criticism toward the Fiji government; whether rhetorical through local media outlets, or expressed in the form of aid restrictions, were interpreted as hostile and seditious acts. For the country's governing elite, opposing sentiments have been met with a combination of legislative restrictions, such as the deregistration of the CCF in mid-2001 for 'political activities', expulsion of expatriate officials, and media 'blackouts'. As one development practitioner stated, the whole "...legal and regulatory environment in which NGOs operate [in Fiji] determines the kinds of NGOs that develop [and] flourish...[so] unless you have the framework and regulations they [the government] always have recourse [to] shut down the NGO sector with one act of parliament" (Development Practitioner, Interview 2, 2002). This uncertainty fosters a general feeling of mistrust and acrimony which inculcates development relations within and between NGOs and Fiji government departments (Ali, SCF, Interview 1: 2002).

Another important consideration, and one which is discussed at length in Chapter Five, is the way in which issues of identity underpin political tensions which in turn exacerbate NGO concerns and capabilities²¹. For example, while a source of

²¹ This also takes attention away from urgent social and environmental issues.

'Pacific empowerment' in more conciliatory circles (see Chapter Four), Indigenous and Christian discourses continue to be wielded by those in authoritative government positions to the detriment of certain groups in society (see especially 5.5). These powerful discourses, and the actions they produce, continue to harbour ill feeling in the country.

1.6 METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES

In this section I give a timeline of the empirical work including the methods undertaken, sources of material utilised, and a general introduction to the epistemological bearings underlying the research. I begin with a brief justification for the choice of Fiji followed by an account of the sequence of events and interview locations. I conclude with a preliminary contextual discussion which positions the relevance of postcolonial methodologies to the thesis.

Given the close proximity of the east coast of Australia to the Melanesian Islands, Fiji was an obvious choice for my research²². First, as the commercial and administrative hub of the South Pacific, Fiji is the focal point of many institutions and organisations involved in development. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Australia's High Commission (where AusAID's Country Post is located), the United National Development Programme (UNDP) and The University of the South Pacific's (USP) main Laclua campus are all located in Suva, Fiji's capital. Second, and perhaps due to this centrality, Suva is also home to a myriad of non-

government organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs) and various secretariats working within Fiji and throughout the Pacific. Third, and importantly, English is widely spoken in the country and therefore was not a limitation given that I do not speak Fijian or Hindustani²³. And finally, Fiji's unique historical legacies, referring here to the British administration's decision to draw on Indian labour in the 19th and early 20th centuries and the contemporary impacts of that decision, meant the country presented a rich and timely case study for a postcolonial analysis. This was particularly the case as Fiji does not represent a typical example of pre-independence struggle between the 'coloniser' and the suppressed or numerically inferior 'colonised'²⁴.

For these reasons, Fiji was a salient location to undertake the bulk of the in-depth interviews and also represented the key site to draw on a variety of academic and nonacademic resources not available elsewhere. For example, many of the documents and theses were either archival manuscripts available only from the Laclua Campus at USP or were writings and documents that had limited access. The documents from the two stakeholder workshops used in Chapter Three, for example, were not published for broader distribution. Generally, these types of documents, while providing a very specific function²⁵, were less likely to be circulated beyond participants and those immediately involved.

²² As I am based in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia. In Chapter Six I delve further into other aspects of this decision and my original aims.

²³ I reflect critically on this aspect of my decision in Chapter Six.

²⁴ The issues implied by this point and the previous one are elaborated on in Chapter Five.

²⁵ See 3.2 and 3.3.

In terms of my Australian-based interviews, Canberra was the obvious location, again, given that Australia's capital is the home of many organisations operating throughout the Pacific, including of course AusAID. Canberra is also the site of the Australian National University's (ANU) State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project, along with The Australian Council for Overseas Development (ACFID), Australia's peak co-ordinating body for non-government overseas aid and international development organisations. These organisation's resources provided substantial and current information on the aid industry and broader developmental issues pertinent to the South Pacific.

The interviews for the thesis were undertaken between April 2002 and July 2003²⁶. They commenced in Canberra with Family Planning Australia (FPA) and Australian People for Health Education and Development Abroad (APHEDA) in mid-April, 2002. While APHEDA did not have specific projects in Fiji at the time, their representative had extensive experience in the region including specific project knowledge in Fiji. FPA, on the other hand, had several ongoing projects with their Fijian counterparts. This interview provided considerable grounding and background knowledge for the subsequent Fiji-based interviews conducted the following month, particularly for those health-related NGOs operating in the country.

The first series of interviews were undertaken in Fiji commencing on the 8th May and finishing on the 28th May, 2002. Twenty five interviews²⁷ were conducted during this period with Fiji government department officials, inter-government organisations, donor representatives, development practitioners and regional and local NGO and CBO personnel²⁸. The 'speaking positions' of those interviewed was largely representative of the country's demography with the majority being of Indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian decent respectively, followed by a combination of other minority groups and expatriates. I also engaged in numerous informal discussions with development specialists, aid workers, academics and various Suva residents during this initial fieldtrip to Fiji.

The next stage of the research involved returning to Fiji to partake in feedback and follow-up interviews during September and October, 2002. These were primarily with participants from the May 2002 series, but also included additional organisational representatives unavailable on the previous occasion. In this second series of interviews I opened with a summary of the key findings following analysis of the initial fieldtrip. The main focus of this series of interviews was to pursue several recurrent themes that were either explicitly or implicitly raised by participants in the May 2002 series. These themes and the interviewee responses

²⁶ See Appendix Item 1 for the interview questions (in Chapter Six I also discuss the way the questions evolved during the research and the epistemological underpinning of my focus).

²⁷ See Appendix Item 2 for a list of departments and organisations interviewed.

²⁸ One revealing omission in terms of NGOs consulted was the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), the national umbrella organisation for NGOs in the country. This was evidently due to previous poor research practices experienced by FCOSS, hence an aversion to my requests. The latter may have also been due to a level of apprehension toward the prospect of criticism directed at

to the second series of interviews dramatically altered the direction of the thesis from one emphasising NGO advocacy (see below) to a focus on development identities²⁹. Nineteen interviews were conducted during this second fieldtrip to the country.

Having completed the two primary interview series in Fiji, I returned to Canberra in June 2003 to offer substantive feedback to both AusAID and ACFID representatives on issues of mutual interest, as well as concerns raised by aid organisations in Fiji. This included a discussion of the background to my research, followed by a summary of the recurrent themes (alluded to above) and a set of questions designed to enable direct comment on these specific issues³⁰. These interviews involving AusAID and ACFID marked the conclusion of the interview process. The responses to this feedback, along with those of the other Canberra and Fiji-based interviewees³¹, provided an eclectic set of perspectives which were subsequently compiled into a document and distributed in July 2004 to all interview participants and others involved in the aid industry throughout the region³².

Before outlining the thesis aims in the penultimate section of the introduction, I want to posit the significance of postcolonial methodologies as a core theme of this

the organisation (which has dogged FCOSS during the current directorship [NGO Representative, Interview 1: 2002]).

²⁹ I discuss these at length in Chapter Five and again in Chapter Six.

³⁰ See Appendix Items 3 and 4 for the feedback themes and questions presented to AusAID and ACFID. The responses, particularly those of ACFID are not elaborated on to any extent in the thesis. This was the case when the direction of the research changed following the second interview series to Fiji.

³¹ In total, 47 in-depth interviews were conducted (43 in Fiji and 4 in Canberra).

study. In 1.1 I identified a tendency in orthodox development studies to give little notice to the voices of the poor. I also made mention of the subsequent critique of this position which led to an apprehension towards any involvement at all in the plight of those living in the majority world. Postcolonial methodologies present an eclectic and hopeful path between these two ultimately insensitive positions. One key inclination guiding this path, as made clear in 1.2, is the need to strip back dominant Western constructs; categories, orderings and stereotypes. This can also be said for academic discourses. As is argued throughout Chapter Six, academia too requires a fundamental shift in the way it constructs the 'Third World'. It is in this sense that the methodological choices we (academics) make when writing on, and in, the majority world take on a special and urgent significance. How do we 'choose' research topics? What knowledge is deemed relevant? And, how are participants chosen? Postcolonial criticism elevates such methodological questions.

Locating the 'self' in epistemological and methodological choices forces introspection and constant modification of our concepts and practices. Crucially, the impetus needs to be, as Raghuram and Madge (2006, 270-1) rightfully proclaim, "...the conceptual landscapes of those with whom we engage". The relevance of postcolonial methodologies lies in prioritising the concerns, ideas and aspirations of research participants. Guided by these considerations, my choice of area (aid industry), theoretical stance (drawing on Foucault, Said, Spivak), primary

³² See Appendix Item 5 (*'In your words'*).

organisational focus (NGOs), shifting aims (from advocacy to identities) and transformative objectives (co-construction of knowledge), engendered a research project which aimed to respect these 'conceptual landscapes'. But such is the dictates of postcolonialism's antecedents, the question of whether or not these aims were achieved remains the domain of the participants themselves.

1.7 THESIS AIMS

There are four broad aims of this thesis. The first aim is to emphasise the historical and productive features of development discourse in the South Pacific and elsewhere. I develop the position that while the actions and enunciations of individuals and collective groups are framed and constrained by dominant discourses—neoliberal discourse in this instance—they also resist, appropriate and transform discourses and in doing so expose the latter's fragility, contradictions and possibilities. For instance, resistances and appropriations can come from within the primary movers of these discourses and do not just develop from oppositional sources. In Fiji's development aid industry, for example, resistance³³ is expressed within donor agencies as well as from the actions of critical NGOs. Importantly too, appropriations of dominant discourses do not necessarily involve emancipatory goals or some consensual notion of 'community' empowerment. George Speight's appropriation of UN conventions on the rights of indigenous

³³ The definition of resistance here draws on the understanding provided by Routledge (1996). For the latter, the term resistance refers to "any action, imbued with intent, that attempts to challenge, change, or retain particular circumstances relating to social relations, processes, and/ or institutions...[resistance] may be open and confrontational or hidden, and range from the individual to the collective" (1996, 415).

peoples³⁴ and the then Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase's call for Fiji to become a 'Christian state', illustrate two examples where discourses, in this case, that of indigenous rights and Christianity respectively, are used to legitimise the actions of some to the detriment of others; namely Indo-Fijians³⁵.

The second aim of the thesis is to draw attention to cultural factors or issues of identity and to emphasise their constitutive bearing on development relations and interventions. To date, these issues have remained marginal in mainstream development studies despite a renewed level of clarity on their importance in the last decade or so (Allen, 1992; Connell, 2007b; Eriksson Baaz, 2005; Schech and Haggis, 2000; Schech and Haggis, 2002). Following the first of two fieldtrips to Fiji in 2002, a number of underlying issues emerged from interviews with key individuals involved in the development aid industry in the country. While the interview questions primarily focused on the organisation's perceived role in development and its advocacy potential vis-à-vis informing policy at various levels, concerns and aspirations surrounding issues of tradition, religion, ethnicity and gender surfaced. These issues, in turn, informed the line of questioning in the follow-up interviews for the second fieldtrip. Clearly, these cultural factors informed and shaped the understandings and practices of individuals and organisations involved in development aid in the country. Highlighting these explicit and implicit

³⁴ In order to legitimise the hostage crisis during the 2000 coup.

³⁵ At the time of writing roughly 44% of Fiji's population is Indo-Fijian (or Fijians who are primarily descendents of indentured labourers from various parts of India). As such, the majority of the Indo-Fijian populations living in Fiji are followers of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faiths.

references to questions of identity, I argue the need to continue the ongoing conversation between ‘culture’ and ‘development’.

The third aim of the thesis is to propose a much more diffused notion of ‘politics’ and ‘political engagement’ than currently dominates the development aid industry. Often viewed in a rather strict sense—as the functionings of parliamentary democracy, implementation of programmes or a sphere operating separate from the ‘market’ and ‘civil society’—politics here encompasses what Slater (2002) refers to as, “...the production and deployment of knowledge” (2002: 99). In extending conventional political parameters, Slater (2002) invokes the familiar Foucauldian terrain of the functionings of discourses³⁶. To use the example of development discourse, the act of naming or ‘delimitation of objects’ (Foucault, 1972) involves defining what can be talked about (civil society, in the case) and what ‘problem’ requires intervention. It also involves the establishment of authorities (development experts, academics) and institutional sites (universities, governments, development workshops) through which legitimacy is conferred (qualifications, consultancies). It is within these institutional sites that concepts are formed (good governance), unique language constituted (‘donor speak’) and strategic choices configured (liberal democracy). Returning to Slater’s (2002) definition, the act of naming (production of knowledge) is a highly political activity which is mediated through the functionings of institutional sites and the practices of its authorities (deployment of knowledge). Warf (2004) cogently repeats the point

declaring that “[w]ord-making is also world-making: that is, discourses do not simply mirror the world—they constitute it” (2004, 48). Representations always have social consequences, Warf adds; “they are saturated with politics by serving dominant or subversive discourses” (2004, 48).

Given these brief but lucid observations (Slater, 2002; Warf, 2004), where the creation of ideas and their dissemination are as politically significant as ‘who’s in government’, academia and research itself become an obvious, though often overlooked political site in development debates. This aspect of development intervention constitutes the fourth aim in this thesis. In particular, I aim to ‘unpack’ academic representations and relations with the ‘Third World’. I argue that this is a crucial precursor to nurturing dialectical unity between teaching, research and community service (Howitt, 2001) as we negotiate and construct shared meanings and imagine and act out new futures.

Whether in terms of methodology, research ethics or pedagogy, academia is a location where knowledge is created and objects of study delineated, analysed, disseminated and ‘written up’. It is also where the majority world is ‘expertly’ represented, taught and its present and futures debated. It is within academia that familiar binaries—researcher/ researched, qualitative/ quantitative and field/ non-field—continue to maintain processes of social differentiation with ‘real’ material effects. Kobayashi (1994) provides a succinct declaration and agenda on this point:

³⁶ Pre-Foucauldian notions of discourse vary considerably from the use applied by Foucault (see

“[t]he political is not only personal, it is a commitment to deconstruct the barrier between the academy and the lives of the people it professes to represent” (1994, 73). As was discussed in the opening section of this introduction, geography as a discipline is inescapably marked by its location as a western colonial science (Sidaway, 2002) and in this respect its intervention, perhaps more than any other discipline, requires considerable critique, especially if it is going to maintain its relevance, as Kobayashi (1994) put it, to the lives of those it professes to represent and empower.

The overarching challenge, to which this thesis hopes to contribute, is the problematisation of the inevitabilities assumed within neoliberal (development) discourse and practices of development in Fiji and the South Pacific in order to forge collaborative and negotiated efforts to build ‘bridge identities’ (Ferguson, 1998).

1.8 THESIS PARTS AND CHAPTERS

This thesis consists of three parts, an introduction and a conclusion. The parts differentiate between the key themes and contain an introduction followed by two chapters. Part I (Chapter’s Two and Three) foregrounds the self-evidence that pervades development discourse and provides examples of the latter’s framing and constraining characteristics. Part II (Chapter’s Four and Five) introduces postcolonial critique into the development equation, focusing on the fragility and

transformative potential of development discourse. Part III (Chapter's Six and Seven) continues postcolonialism's import and 'unpacks' academic discourse, particularly geography, before considering both its colonising tendencies and collaborative and empowering potential. In this final section of the Introduction I summarise each of the parts and chapters that make up this thesis.

Part I opens with several questions that problematise development's self-evidence. Drawing of Foucault's (1972) earlier work on discourse, Chapter Two establishes the historical and productive features of development discourse, drawing systematically on his 'rules of formation of a discourse'. Using examples from the Pacific and elsewhere, I identify the 'objects', 'statements' and 'concepts' that make up development discourse in order to highlight its dense and productive characteristics. In Chapter Three I concentrate on one specific institutional site of development discourse—the development stakeholder workshop—to show how the latter both frames and constrains the actions and enunciations of individuals and groups. Utilising the Foucauldian works of Ferguson (1990) and Green (2003), I focus on civil society as a specific 'object' of development discourse and argue how the stakeholder workshop facilitates uniformity, imposes a very specific language and envisions highly prescriptive outcomes. In doing so, I suggest that the stakeholder workshop frames the actions that produce and deploy a highly prescribed and increasingly globalised format for 'capacity building'. Given this, I do not want to overstate the point. For example, the uniformity in these institutional sites can also be contested. Indeed, the examples of NGO dissent described in

Chapter Four occurred in the same stakeholder workshop drawn upon to identify their prescriptive and *depoliticising* function (see below). In the next section I describe the role of the development ‘expert’ or facilitator, in the case of the stakeholder workshop, as an individual or group of individuals who are afforded the status to speak in this institutional site. I argue that the vastly regulated managerial techniques used to ‘strengthen’ civil society, *depoliticises* the capacity building process, reducing it to a technical problem, and one to which no one can object.

In Part II I move from focusing on development’s productive and constraining features to look at the fragility and contradictions that are also to be found within development discourse. In Chapter Four, I draw on a Foucauldian-inspired postcolonial sensibility to consider the way discourses are contested and appropriated in the context of Fiji’s aid industry. I begin by revealing the way individuals within the aid industry in the country subvert and transform development discourse. Focusing on the stakeholder workshop, specific NGOs, donor representatives and an individual working in a cross-sectorial capacity, I highlight the diverse ways in which people contest the uniformities generated by development discourse.

In Chapter Five I focus specifically on the complex interplay of cultural identities; ‘traditions’, religion, gender and ethnicity, in the South Pacific and Fiji. I highlight the contested and fluid nature of cultural identities while emphasising the way issues of identity saturate the way development relations are understood and

carried out. Despite the obvious importance of cultural issues in understanding and explaining development in the South Pacific, I reveal that donors continue to marginalise this integral part of social life in the region. I then consider Fiji's British legacies and emphasise the country's colonial continuities. I do this in order to show how the colonial administration created a society where issues of identity, in this case ethnic-separateness, were a central part of Fijian society. By historicising Fiji's colonial present, I reinforce the urgency with which donors should incorporate issues of identity more centrally into their policies and programmes decisions. I conclude Part II by showing that 'culture', while often a source of positive innovative and empowerment, can also be appropriated and misused. In Fiji, the appropriation of indigenous and Christian discourses by those in powerful positions have led to the disempowerment and marginalisation of sections of the community; most notably Indo-Fijians.

In Part III I scrutinise academic interventions on and in the "Third World". I set up the discussion by confronting two key debates currently underway in geography. The first involves calls to decolonise the discipline; the second relates to concerns over the perceived irrelevance of development geography in broader development debates. I begin Chapter Six by identifying colonising tendencies that characterised geography's imperial past and emphasise the ways in which these have continued in contemporary disciplinary texts on development issues. I then focus on the extractive and colonising practices that persist in research conducted in the South Pacific, including aspects of my own work. Following this self-assessment I

highlight the issues of relevance and methodology and the pertinence of postcolonialism when aspiring towards more equitable research relations. I consider my attempts to move beyond the artificial boundaries that often limit academic enterprises by laying bare my own epistemological and methodological choices when undertaking research in Fiji.

In Chapter Seven I look at the production and deployment of different forms of development praxis to those that continue to dominate development and academic discourses. I open the chapter by adding clarity to postcolonialism's take on 'politics' and reinforce my position (and that presented in the thesis) on the materiality of discourse. I then argue that the forms of praxis that I am writing about; be they examples of grounded practices, performances, concerns or aspirations of those within Fiji's aid industry or examples of postcolonial geographies, *repoliticise* these many development sites by offering new critiques, knowledges, methodologies, forms of teaching, strategies of dissent or modes of conceptualisation and collectivity. In this context, 'doing development differently' involves no distinction being made between theory ('academic work') and practice ('development work'). Rather, they are dialectically and productively entwined.

In the concluding chapter I return to several key questions and issues raised throughout the thesis. Firstly, having put together a substantial piece on development aid relations in Fiji, I again pose the question only tentatively answered in the opening chapter; what does my postcolonial narrative add to the

extensive collection of critical studies and writings that already exist on the South Pacific? Highlighting postcolonialism's conceptual fluidity and emphasis on interconnectedness and constitutive relationships, I suggest that the latter might offer communicative possibilities between an increasingly parochial donor presence in the South Pacific on the one hand, and a vocal mass of individuals and groups who view, more than ever, the critical need to incorporate cultural considerations into development planning and programmes, on the other. I then attempt to address the fundamental question of whether or not the examples of critical voices and calls for Pacific ownership of development processes in Fiji's aid industry embody a substantive deviation from the scriptures of good governance, or do they simply represent an 'ordering of dissent' (Kothari, 2005) bound within the auspices of the neoliberal development agenda? Following this I confront the limitations of the thesis which includes a virtual silence on the issue of class relations as part of my discussion on identities. There is also the fact that I only interviewed representatives of prominent NGOs, donors and government officials i.e., those individuals who may be perceived as being largely privileged themselves and far removed from the beneficiaries of their activities. I conclude Chapter Eight by considering future implications of my work for postcolonial geography, and perhaps more critically, given my emphasis on relevance in the thesis, for the aid industry itself.

PART I

DEVELOPMENT'S SELF-EVIDENCE

INTRODUCTION

What generates the self-evidence that underpins the development aid industry today? And, how does development discourse manifest itself in the context of the Pacific and Fiji? In Chapter Two and Three I emphasise the historical and productive characteristics that sustain development discourse in order to explore these questions. To do this I utilise Michael Foucault's early work on discourse, in particular, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: the discourse on language* (1972)³⁷. Through a Foucauldian analysis I aim to gain a better understanding of why it is so hard to think other than in terms of 'good governance', 'capacity building' and 'strengthening civil society' when it comes to the development aid industry. For instance, what permits development discourse to retain its ascendancy, and its ability to mute or consume alternative ways of thinking and acting³⁸, when it contains so many contradictions? This emphasis also directs the themes and examples presented in Chapter Three as I focus on a specific institutional site of development discourse – the stakeholder workshop. Importantly though, while Part I stresses the way development discourse frames and constrains thinking and acting (therefore producing its own self-evidence), Part II focuses on the transformative potential that emerges from the gaps and contradictions also to be found within development discourse.

³⁷ For the remainder of the thesis I abbreviate this text to 'The Archaeology of Knowledge' (1972).

³⁸ That is, alternatives to dominant neo-liberal development discourse.

CHAPTER 2

Formation and production of development discourse

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In pursuing the formation and production of development discourse I am interested in the kinds of fundamental questions that guided Foucault's (1970, 1972, 1978 [1968]) early theorisations on discourse and the human sciences—what can be said? What can be thought? And, how do discourses limit who we can be? (see McHoul and Grace, 1993, esp. 31 – 41) The proposition underlying these questions is that in any given historical period we speak, write or think about a given object or practice only in certain ways and not others. As McHoul and Grace (1993) suggest, for Foucault a discourse is "...*whatever* constrains—but also enables—writing, speaking and thinking within such specific historical limits" (1993, 31 emphasis in original). For example, in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1970)³⁹ Foucault talks about how in the sixteenth century language was not what it was because it had a meaning and representative content, which became a "guiding thread" (Foucault, 1970: 35) for grammarians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but was considered a natural device which resided "...in the world, among the plants, the herbs, the stones, and the animals" (Foucault, 1970: 35). In other words, language was not an arbitrary system as was self-evident later. In the sixteenth century such forms of thought were simply not available.

The main proposition argued in this chapter and developed further in Chapter Three is that by considering both the conditions under which discourses emerge and the functionings of these discourses, specifically the case of development discourse in the Pacific and Fiji, we can start to explain why so many well-intentioned people involved in the development aid industry can declare with such certainty very specific goals and objectives and not others. Importantly too, Foucauldian discourse analysis forces us, as Sara Mills (2003, 64) suggests, "...to see the strangeness of our current state of knowledge and to question the way that we think, and the conceptual tools which we use to think with"⁴⁰.

In the following sections (2.1 through 2.3) I systematically draw on Foucault's 'rules of formation of a discourse' as formulated in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). I identify the 'objects', 'statements', and 'concepts' that constitute development discourse in order to flesh out its dense and productive characteristics.

2.2 CIVIL SOCIETY AS 'OBJECT' OF DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

In his discussion on the functions of a discourse, the first being the 'formation of objects', Foucault (1972) uses the example of psychopathology in the nineteenth century to distinguish between aspects of this specialised function. First, Foucault refers to

³⁹ For the remainder of the thesis I abbreviate this text to 'The Order of Things' (1970).

⁴⁰ Mills (2003) captures here one of the key themes discussed at length in Chapter Six in relation to geographical knowledges and other academic discourses.

the *surfaces* of an object's *emergence*. Specifically, Foucault means the manner in which psychiatric discourse enables the limiting of its domain, defines what it can talk about (through degrees of rationalisation and conceptual codes, for instance), and confers the provision of status to an object, in this case, determining the status of a disease. In this way the object is constructed by the discourse "...making it manifest, nameable, and describable" (Foucault, 1972: 41).

There are many objects of development discourse or 'problems' requiring 'specialised' intervention in the development aid industry. Broadly speaking, the country marked for intervention, and its government, is invariably in need of 'special attention' with a list of deficiencies and ailing political and economic institutions. The objectification and defining of poverty or 'the poor' is another example (Escobar, 1995). In this section I briefly consider civil society which has emerged in the last two decades as a designated area of intervention in development. In the following excerpt, taken from a UNDP policy statement, civil society's *surfaces of emergence* are defined and parameters established;

Civil society is, together with the State and market, one of the three spheres that interface in the making of democratic societies...(UNDP, 1993: 1).

With its 'delimitation', civil society is accorded the status of an object, making it nameable and describable. UNDP's familiar overlapping typology; of the State, market and civil society, depict a vision of balance and segregation (Van Rooy,

1998). The UNDP typology is a good example of a delimiting schemata that affords status to a predetermined type and number of distinguishable sectors. Importantly, this schemata is an homogenous formulae of intervention replicable in any country⁴¹. Though a relatively new concept in the Pacific (Naidu, 2000), civil society has been embraced as an area of specific attention by donors (Donor Representative, 2003). Indeed, there have been a number of UNDP and other donor funded consultations and initiatives (CID/UNOPS, 2001, 2002; UNDP, 2000; see Chapter three) undertaken which reinforce civil society's status as a describable sector, invariably in need of (expert) intervention and at various stages of deficiency. The following statements are taken from a UNDP commissioned study on the relationship between CSOs and United Nations agencies in the Pacific. The identified UNDP/NGO objectives are to;

- *Operationalise* partnerships with civil society in all areas *identified by UNDP as priorities* for SHD [sustainable human development];
- *Strengthen civil society* by facilitating interaction among NGOs, Governments, the private sector and bi/multilateral organisations;
- *Strengthen the capacity* of NGOs to design and implement initiatives which further the goals of SHD (UNDP, 2000: 7; emphasis added).

The hierarchy and position of the donor is established in its defining of the relationship. Here, for instance, UNDP 'operationalises partnerships' and 'identifies

⁴¹ In Chapter three I discuss at length these predetermined types.

priorities'. Furthermore, there is the inference of deficiency and the establishment of the ultimate objective itself: sustainable human development. Civil society is always in need of 'facilitating' or 'strengthening' or NGOs in need of 'increased capacity'. The defining of civil society or provision of status is also a strategic enterprise. The broader and more inclusive the definition, the more objects of intervention subject to programmes. Moreover, claims of collaboration and consent (and therefore legitimacy) are easier to establish if the definition is broadened. Paradoxically, given the designated parameters of UNDP's typology, the inclusion of the private sector and 'government' non-government organisations (or GONGOs), into donor definitions of civil society has raised concerns over the genuine collaborative nature of UNDP/CSO relationships and those of other donors vis-à-vis their stated intentions of prioritising those most in need (which is one key reason for collaboration in the first place).

A second aspect of Foucault's 'formation of objects' involves identifying the *authorities of delimitation*. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault describes how medicine in the nineteenth century (aided by religious authority, literary and art criticism) became the authority that delimited, designated and named 'madness' as an object. It was able to do this as an institution with its own rules, individual groups of medical professionals, body of knowledge and practice, and authority recognised by public opinion and legitimised by the law and government.

The emergence of civil society in development discourse can be understood through the functionings of development institutions, governing rules and objectives, groups of development professionals, and bodies of expert knowledge and practice (see further Chapter Three especially 3.3). But it was not only through its network of donor and other institutions that it established its legitimacy. With its global reach, its authority was produced through its encompassing of departments and bureaucracies, private sector organisations such as banks and companies, and the plethora of development studies programmes in institutes of learning worldwide (Crush, 1995: Watts, 1995). Moreover, its legality was established through government association, international law and public opinion. This level of collaboration and mutual recognition within and between development organisations, departments and bureaucracies have become increasingly evident in the case of the Pacific aid industry as I describe further in the following Chapter Three.

Significant to Foucault's (1972) discussion on the 'formation of objects' as part of his rules of formation of a discourse is the importance given to groups of relations as he makes clear in the following passage:

If, in a particular period in the history of our society, the delinquent was psychologised and pathologies, if criminal behaviour could give rise to a whole series of objects of knowledge, this was because a group of particular relations was adopted for use in psychiatric discourse (Foucault, 1972: 43).

The kinds of relations to which Foucault refers are those between, for instance, the authority of medical decision and that of judicial decision. The former recognising the authority of the latter to define crime, to determine the circumstances in which crime is committed, and the punishment that it deserves. A second relational example is that between therapeutic confinement in hospital (with its own criteria or cure and way of differentiating between 'the normal' and 'the pathological') and punitive confinement in prison (with its specific pedagogic function and criteria of conduct and improvement). By way of summary, then, the 'formation of objects' in nineteenth century psychiatric discourse is characterised by the way in which it forms objects and this formation is made possible by a group of relations instituted between authorities of delimitation. In the same way, and as I will convey further in the following section, only certain individuals located in specific institutional sites are sanctioned with the authority to define criteria in the development aid industry.

2.3 THE FORMATION OF ENUNCIATIVE MODALITIES: THE CASE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

[W]ho is speaking? Who, among the totality of speaking individuals, is accorded the right to use this sort of language? Who is qualified to do so? Who derives from it his (sic) own special quality, his prestige, and from whom, in return, does he receive if not the assurance, at least the presumption that what he says is true? What is the status of the individuals who – alone – have the right, sanctioned by law or tradition, juridically

defined or spontaneously accepted, to proffer such a discourse? (Foucault, 1972: 50).

When articulating enunciative modalities Foucault (1972) uses the example of the doctor in medical discourse in the 19th century. The status of the doctor, according to Foucault (1972), is produced through criteria of competence and knowledge. These involve institutions, systems, pedagogic norms and legal conditions that give the right to practise medicine and extend one's (the doctor's) knowledge. It also involves a system of differentiation and relations with other individuals or other groups that also possess their own status⁴². For example, Foucault (1972) refers to the division of attributions, hierarchical subordination and requests for and provision of exchange of information. As a consequence of these criteria and relations, the status of the doctor is, as Foucault (1972) attests, quite a special one. Medical statements cannot come from anybody:

...their value, efficacy, even their therapeutic powers, and, generally speaking, their existence as medical statements cannot be dissociated from the statutorily defined person who has the right to make them...(1972, 51).

In the case of development discourse, it is through the dense ensemble of normative processes (social, cultural, political)—manifest in specific institutions, systems and norms—that the development expert is conceived as the qualified

sovereign of truth claims. The development expert is the person to whom prestige is conferred (through academic qualifications, for example) and whose expertise is rarely questioned (and often inflated). The ‘truth’ of their knowledge lie in this productive ensemble and in the formalised sites of development; the international agency, the development studies department, the specialised ‘think-tank’, the ‘stakeholder workshop’ (see below and Chapter Three).

A second of Foucault’s (1972) elements of the formation of enunciative modalities is the institutional *sites* from which a discourse derives its legitimate source and point of application: “...its specific objects and instruments of verification” (1972: 51). There are several institutional sites that Foucault (1972) refers to in relation to medical discourse. There is the hospital; a place of constant, coded, systematic observation run by a differentiated and hierarchised medical staff. The laboratory too constitutes one of these sites; an autonomous place, where, as Foucault (1972) argues, “...certain truths of a general kind, concerning the human body...[are established, and] which provide certain elements of the diagnosis, certain signs of the developing condition [and] certain criteria of cure...” (1972, 51). Another institutional site referred to by Foucault (1972) is the ‘library’ or documentary field. Here he is talking about the documents; books, treaties, observations and case-histories published which are recognised as valid and which are supplied to the doctor.

⁴² This has similarities or overlaps with Foucault’s discussion on authorities of delimitation (see

It is within the international development agency, the specialist ‘think tank’, the ‘stakeholder’ workshop that development discourse produces its ‘objects’ of intervention, its instruments of verification and ‘criteria of cure’. For example, once produced, civil society is acted upon according to certain ‘truths’ and in a coded, constant and systematic way. Institutional sites, in this case the stakeholder workshop, provides the location where interventions are diagnosed and differentiated through highly prescribed institutionalised management tools and auditing techniques. ‘Truths’ are established in proportion to regular checks and balances provided through evaluative and monitoring procedures (see further 3.1 i.e., logframes). It is the combination of these internal functionings, procedures and prescribed cures, including the establishment of the site itself, that creates the latter’s legitimacy. A third aspect of Foucault’s formation of a discourse is the deployment of a system of permanent and coherent concepts. It is here where we can see quite clearly at play Foucault’s (1972) ‘library’ or documentary field as terms and ideas are routinely invoked, and in the case of development discourse, constitute development’s unique language. It is to the formation of these coherent concepts that I now turn.

2.4 THE FORMATION OF CONCEPTS: GOOD GOVERNANCE

In Fiji, as championed elsewhere, ‘good governance’ is held as the ideal for a “good society” (AusAID, 2000: 3). The stated key elements are the political and economic spheres and within these demarcations are the specific objects for

intervention; civil society, government and the private sector. Good governance operates within development discourse as a specific language ('donor speak') and coherent concept. Excerpts from two key AusAID publications are used to illustrate the guiding statements which generate and maintain this coherence. Significantly, as Crush (1995) points out, the statements or texts of development contain an important function in that they have "...always been avowedly strategic and tactical—promoting, licensing and justifying certain interventions and practices, delegitimising and excluding others" (1995: 5).

The introductory passages in *Australian Aid: Investing in Growth, Stability and Prosperity* (2002) and *Good Governance: Guiding principles for implementation* (AusAID, 2000) are useful in the way these documents establish the *orderings*, *dependences*, *co-existences* and *procedures* required by the body of knowledge that is good governance and in how they are generative in its production (and reproduction):

The single objective established for the Australian aid program in *Better Aid for a Better Future* will remain: To advance Australia's national interest by assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. The Statement⁴³ reinforces the aid programme's focus on assisting developing countries in the Asia Pacific, for both development and

⁴³ 'The Statement' here refers to this document (*Australian Aid: Investing in Growth, Stability and Prosperity*) which was the eleventh one presented to the Australian parliament on the country's Development Cooperation Program by Alexander Downer, the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

national interest reasons. It also emphasises the critical importance of good governance as the basis for successful poverty reduction and development. (AusAID, *Australian Aid: Investing in Growth, Stability and Prosperity*, 2002: 5).

Good governance is an essential precondition for sustainable development (AusAID, *Good Governance: Guiding principles for implementation*, 2000: 5).

Foucault (1972) describes the '*orderings* of enunciative series' which can involve the order of inferences and the way in which events are distributed in linear succession. Taking these guiding statements in turn, the linearity, spatial distribution and implied inference in the excerpts above are clear enough. Providing 'good' governance is undertaken development in the Asia Pacific will ensue. Moreover, and clearer still, good governance is 'an essential precondition' for sustainable development. Types of *dependencies* are also apparent in these guiding statements adding cohesion to the concept. The following excerpt highlights a number of *dependencies*:

The last 30 years have witnessed remarkable progress in achieving poverty reduction and development. The World Bank estimates that average life expectancy in developing countries has increased by 20 years. Adult illiteracy in the developing world has been almost halved, from 47 percent to

25 percent. Most importantly, the number of people living in poverty (i.e. living on less than US\$1 day) has begun to fall...This is in spite of the world's population rising from 3.7 billion in 1970 to over 6 billion in 2001. (AusAID, *Australian Aid: Investing in Growth, Stability and Prosperity*, 2002: 9).

One dependency, in the form of hypothesis and verification, can be understood from the assertion that 'levels of progress' are dependent for their verification on 'average estimates'. A second more substantive dependency involves successive arrangements of statements into particular wholes. In this case, the relation and inter-play of subordinations between describing and classifying (Foucault, 1972). The designation of the descriptive labels 'adult literacy' and 'life expectancy' into categories—'percentage' and 'years' respectively—constitute a series of subordinate statements leading to a higher order concern or classification and that which enables a particular 'whole'. In this case the particular whole is 'total population living in poverty'.

A third configuration that adds coherence to the body of knowledge of good governance is that which involves forms of *co-existence*. The first of these forms is the 'field of presence' which is understood as statements acknowledged to be truthful (truth claims) and involving well-founded reasoning (or necessary presupposition) and which are justified by tradition or authority. Within this field attention is also given to those statements which are criticised, judged or rejected

(Foucault, 1972). In the following excerpts the various 'fields of presence' can be established:

There is an essential link between democratic and accountable government and the ability to achieve sustained economic and social development (AusAID, *Good Governance: Guiding principles for implementation*, 2000: 5).

The Statement also outlines a practical strategy for working more effectively with poor performing states - a key priority for Australia - one that both minimises the impact on the poor of failed states, and encourages government reform (AusAID, *Australian Aid: Investing in Growth, Stability and Prosperity*, 2002: 5).

One presupposition guiding these statements is that sustained economic and social development is dependent on political governance reforms. This truth claim generates the 'reasoning' behind development discourse which appeals to the liberal tradition for its legitimacy and to particular 'well-schooled' authorities. Important too, that which is criticised or rejected, in this case, the presupposition that 'poor performance'—judged in relation to specific indicators—invariably equates to 'state failure'.

Another of Foucault's (1972) organisation of statements, in terms of *co-existence*, involves what can be called the 'field of memory'. This enunciative field comprises statements no longer accepted or discussed as a body of truth or domain of validity, but show relations of filiation, genesis or continuity with the discourse in question. For development discourse, the inaugural address to congress by US President Harry Truman in 1949 is such an enunciative field. Truman's speech established a path to follow, based on economic development, whereby, "Greater production [was] the key to prosperity and security" (Truman cited in Sachs, 1992: 4). According to Truman's vision, a program of technical assistance was designed to "relieve the suffering of these peoples... [through] industrial activities...and a higher standard of living" (Truman cited in Sachs, 1992: 5). The address also embodied a spirit of optimism and anti-communism which inspired broad international enthusiasm (Hodder, 2000; Sachs, 1992).

Modernisation theory captured this vitality with the purpose of reproducing the historical experience of Europe and the US in the 'developing world' (Preston, 1996). Rostow's (1960) 'Stages of Economic Growth' was the most notable of these range of theories which contended that countries naturally undertook a linear sequence of developmental stages. While the narrowly economic sentiments found in Truman's speech, and further embellished by Rostow, are clearly discredited as forming a 'body of truth' in development discourse, the filiation and genesis of linearity and progress found within the above statements (indicators of rising living standards, for instance) have been maintained within the discourse and

constitute areas of distinct continuity with present formulations, such as good governance.

Lastly, Foucault (1972) refers to *procedures of intervention* that may be applied to statements that, along with those described above, enable the conceptual formulation of bodies of knowledge. These procedures may appear as 'methods of transcribing', 'modes of translating' or methods of 'systematising' propositions that already exist. 'Methods of transcribing' statements is undertaken through formalised and artificial language. For development discourse, rhetorical pronouncements are used to establish a formalised and generic ensemble of statements. The universal application of terms such as 'strengthening civil society', 'partnership building', and 'sustainable development' become part of a normative practice of linguistic formalism. The 'modes of translating' refer to the translation of quantitative statements into qualitative formulations and vice versa.

To a large extent, development discourse depends for its validity on these 'modes of translating'; on the dictum that Lorenz curves and other measures of growth (AusAID, 2000) can adequately be translated to explain levels of poverty and subsequently gauge what constitutes a "good society" (AusAID, 2000: 3). Conversely, that qualitative formulations can be converted (often via database) to an interpretation through graphs or charts. By methods of *systematising* already existent propositions is meant the way in which the discourse redistributes statements that are already linked together and rearrange them into a new

systematic whole or form (Foucault, 1972). One archetypal example of *procedures of intervention* in development discourse is the labels used to represent the relationship itself: that between the donor country and the country in which the intervention is taking place. What characterises the permanent 'link' is the relationship of aid or exchange; whether of goods and services, resources or knowledge. The new systematic whole or form, which in this case is observable over time, is the changing reference made to countries of intervention. For instance, terms such as developing countries, Third World countries, 'the South', or 'underdeveloped', readily used in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, have been largely superseded by terms such as 'recipient' or 'partner' countries and the most recent reconfiguration; 'development partner'. The identifying redistribution of the relationship of 'aid', the use of 'partner' for example, is intended to convey a more consensual and less prescriptive portrayal of the relationship.

2.5 CONCLUSION: DEVELOPMENT'S SELF-EVIDENCE, LIMITING WHAT CAN BE SAID AND THOUGHT

The *discourse* of development, the form in which it makes its arguments and establishes its authority, the manner in which it constructs the world, are usually seen as self-evident and unworthy of attention (Crush, 1995: 3, emphasis in original).

Crush's (1995) observation is as apt now as it was over a decade ago. Development discourse remains saturated in its own self-evidence. As I have attempted to show in this chapter, through its sheer historical density and encompassing and enabling unity, development discourse continues to (re)produce objects, guiding statements and coherent concepts as it imbues its definitiveness. In the context of Fiji's aid industry, this combination of productive elements certifies a very specific (and narrow) way of speaking, writing and thinking, while having the effect of muting the possibility of thinking and acting otherwise.

I conclude Chapter Two with a succinct précis of Foucault's (1972) archaeological analysis⁴⁴ by Barry Smart (2002). According to Smart, Foucault's interest lies in "...stripping [discourses] of their virtual self-evidence to discover what constitutes their unity" (2002, 38). In the case of development discourse, this 'stripping down' allows us to explain the unerring beliefs and prescriptive claims that surround and characterise the rhetoric of good governance. It also gives us an understanding of the certainty that pervades the institutional sites from which the discourse derives. In Chapter Three I focus on a specific institutional site of development discourse – the stakeholder workshop.

⁴⁴ Referring here to Foucault's earlier work up until *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972).

CHAPTER 3

That which frames and constrains: discourse and development sites of the Pacific

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Two I was interested in the productive and dense features of development discourse, drawing on examples from the Pacific and elsewhere. The aim was to highlight the conditions under which development discourse emerged and how this frames what can be said and thought. My intention was to explain why it is so difficult to think in terms other than those that resonate, so self-evidently, within the development aid industry. For example, I wanted to accentuate the way 'good governance' is the defining concept, to use Foucault (1972), within which civil society is understood and discussed. In this chapter I focus more specifically on civil society in the Pacific and Fiji and consider the functionings of a very specific institutional site of development discourse; the stakeholder workshop. In this analysis I explicate the way civil society as an 'object' is categorised and acted upon and explain how this is carried out within the auspices of neoliberalism. To do this I draw primarily on the Foucauldian works of Maia Green's (2003) anthropology of development management and James Ferguson's (1990) influential text, 'Anti-politics machine': "development", depoliticisation, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho'.

I start the chapter by considering the global standardisation of development planning and management and describe how these are manifest in the aid industry (see Corbridge *et al*, 2003⁴⁵). One example I give is the widespread use of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) (see Gasper, 2000⁴⁶), particularly in the case of AusAID's project design. Following this description, I consider in more detail how this trend is increasingly evident in the functionings of the stakeholder workshop. I identify the 'toolkit' of performance assessment and other auditing techniques used within this institutional site of development discourse and trace how this phenomenon has been reproduced globally. I follow this by identifying NGO accounts of this standardisation in the context of Fiji's aid industry. I then consider the language of managerialism and deficiency embodied in two stakeholder workshops on civil society conducted in 2001 and 2002⁴⁷ in Fiji. I explain how this language functions to frame the initial actions to be undertaken, guides the workshop agenda while largely predetermining the outputs that are produced.

In the following section (3.4) I focus on the authorities that are afforded the status to speak within these development sites and the historically dense assumptions that underpin their privileged position. I show how these development experts

⁴⁵ Reflecting the use of LFA's internationally, the author's remark that "[a]nyone who has filled out a funding proposal for DFID [the UK government's Department for International Development] will know that you come soon enough to the logical framework" (Corbridge *et al*, 2003: 249).

⁴⁶ Gasper (2000) contrasts the remarkable spread of the LFA against a lack of sustained understanding of its overall limitations. See also Bell (2000) in the same edition who provides a response to Gasper (2000).

⁴⁷ The 2001 workshop was titled 'Strengthening Civil Society in the Pacific: Toward Greater Inter-Agency Cooperation – 2nd Regional Stakeholder Workshop' [hereafter referred to as Regional workshop]. The 2002 workshop was titled 'Strengthening Civil Society in Fiji: Towards a National Plan of Action' [hereafter referred to as National workshop].

facilitate the uniformity and highly prescriptive outcomes produced by development discourse. I also aim to highlight how these individuals of authority are subsumed by the discourse within which they speak. I conclude the chapter by extending Green's (2003) analysis of the stakeholder workshop, drawing on Ferguson's (1990) notion of depoliticisation. Specifically, I reveal how the LFA, the functionings of the workshop, including the selection process, the actions of development experts, and the highly stylised nature of 'donor speak', act to depoliticise capacity building reducing it to a technical problem and one to which no one can object.

3.2 STANDARDISATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Development management is concerned with the relation between investment and outputs over a specific time-frame. Like other auditing techniques, it relies on the production and manipulation of texts through which these relations can be quantified and controlled (Green, 2003:129).

Because of the way "development" interventions are institutionalised, there are strong tendencies for programs to be mixed and marched out of a given set of available choices (Ferguson, 1990: 259).

In Maia Green's (2003) article she discusses the highly standardised features of development planning and project documentation in Tanzania. The work represents a substantial contribution to understanding the social processes of a

specific site of international development intervention (see also Crewe and Harrison, 1998; Pottier, 1997; Stirrat, 2000). Importantly, it identifies the key role that institutionalised management tools play in development planning and how auditing techniques, for instance, quantification of inputs and outputs with very specific time-frames, are unproblematically applied to "...the amorphousness of social reality" (Green, 2003:129; see also Townsend et al, 2002 and (3.5)). Ferguson (1990) too identifies this institutionalised standardization, arguing how development comes as 'packages' of standard available 'inputs', adding that:

...non-standard, unfamiliar elements are more difficult for a large routinised bureaucracy to implement and evaluate, and thus [are] less likely to be approved. With standardised elements, things are much easier (Ferguson, 1990: 259).

Reflecting this increasingly standardised and global implementation of management tools, aid donors and NGOs in the Pacific embrace these techniques with similar constraining effects (Gibson, 2004, pers. com.⁴⁸). AusAID, for example, applies the Logical Framework Approach (LFP) in a range of circumstances and types of aid activities. The LFP is, according to AusAID (2005):

⁴⁸ Lionel Gibson works with the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI). We spoke briefly on how FSPI is developing LFA's to better equip them for the specificities to be found in the Pacific.

“...a long established activity design methodology used by a range of major multilateral and bilateral donors...[aiming to provide] a systematic analysis of the development situation, particularly key development problems, [while also providing] options for addressing those problems” (2005, 1).

One of the generic products of the LFA is The Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) (see Figure 1) which consists of a matrix with four columns; activity description, indicators, means of verification and assumptions: and a number of rows describing certain aspects of an activity design; goal, outcome, component objectives and outputs (AusAID, 2005). Aimed to provide measurable quantification of specific aid activities the matrix identifies what the activity will do, what it will produce, the hierarchy of objectives and the planned results (AusAID, 2005). Though the document in question states explicitly that “[t]hese Guidelines should not be seen as prescribing a formulaic approach to activity design (2005, 4)”, I will argue this is precisely what is produced in terms of limiting, as Ferguson (1990) has said, available choices (see Cracknell, 2000 esp. 113 - 119⁴⁹). As an experienced development practitioner working throughout the Pacific announced when reflecting on the constraining features of the Logical Framework Approach:

...don't be so prescriptive! They [donors] have got these logframes and everything has got to be predetermined before the project starts [where] you

⁴⁹ Specifically, Cracknell (2000, 119) refers to the “danger of rigidity” manifest in the use of the Logical Framework. Tellingly, Cracknell suggests that there can be no denying, “...that the very logicity of the logical framework can at times be its worst enemy!” (2000, 119).

have got to do it in so many years. The whole aid system needs to be reformed so that it is much more responsive, and dynamic, and [that] it is constant. It is about learning rather than about accounting for money...There is a lot of work being done in this area but there is a lot of work [still] to be done...(Development Practitioner, Interview 1: 2002).

Figure 1: General structure and content of a Logical Framework Matrix

Activity Description	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal or impact – The long term development impact (policy goal) that the activity contributes at a national or sectoral level	How the achievement will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Goal indicator(s) - including who will collect it and how often	
Purpose or Outcome – The medium term result(s) that the activity aims to achieve – in terms of benefits to target group	How the achievement of the Purpose will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Purpose indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Purpose to Goal linkage
Component Objectives or Intermediate Results – This level in the objectives or results hierarchy can be used to provide a clear link between outputs and outcomes (particularly for larger multi-component activities)	How the achievement of the Component Objectives will be measured - including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Component Objectives indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Component Objective to Output linkage
Outputs – The tangible products or services that the activity will deliver	How the achievement of the Outputs will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Output indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Output to Component Objective linkage

Source: AusAID (2005: 5)

I return to this point below (3.5) where I draw comparisons between the LFA and the stakeholder workshop; in particular, how these frame the activities and subsequently depoliticise the intervention that takes place.

Another critical component of the 'toolkit' of performance assessment, and one which largely takes up the remainder of the chapter, is the 'stakeholder' workshop where project interventions are reviewed or consultations conducted. 'Stakeholders' are defined as individuals and institutions considered as having a 'stake' in a project and with the potential to impact on it. Green (2003) highlights two key points underlying the objectives and standardised effects of stakeholder workshops. First, the latter are essentially about building credibility and legitimacy for the intervention among particular social constituencies recognised by the agency as having a 'stake' in the project. Second, the stakeholder category include donor representatives, recipient organisations as well as carefully selected representatives of beneficiary communities. Here, Green (2003) points out that the stakeholder category is to an extent created through this 'careful' selection of participants in that the latter determine the knowledge created and therefore can limit the workshop in terms of its stated aims and objectives.

One example identified by participants in the National workshop was that there was a large bias, in terms of participation, toward those civil society organisations based in Suva, the country's capital (CIDA/UNOPS, 2002). The types of concerns

that such a disparity might invoke were made known during the in-depth interviews⁵⁰ as the following quotes reveal:

[I]t seems the things that we see in the newspaper and that we talk about here in Suva amongst these 'elite' NGOs and the donors [is one thing]. The reality is much different down on the ground. I mean night and day different. People weren't talking about the court cases and the problems with Speight [during the coup]. All the things we were worried about, the constitutional crisis, multi-party government etc. It seemed like everyone in the country was talking about that [they were] but only in Suva! (Development Practitioner, Interview 2: 2002)

Suva can sometimes be too academic for what is going on in reality...I mean even here in Suva you talk about human rights, democracy and good governance people say no, no, it's not for us it's for those people over there. So if you want to create ownership of development at the end of the day it means you need to go into the community...(NGO Representative, Interview 2: 2002).

Suva's dominance in terms of its centralised role in government and prominent location for development bureaucracies has resulted in an equally localised

⁵⁰ Many of those interviewed were among those present at the workshop.

concentration of 'elite' NGOs (see Singh, 1994⁵¹). This has led to questions over the insular circulation of 'hot topics' in Suva and the possibility of these professional organisations becoming detached from the rural concerns of those living outside the city boundaries. The primary point being made here is that the stated aims and objectives of the workshop are framed by the standardised processes of selection. Given this, to what extent could the workshop truly be a '*National* Plan of Action', as is stated in the workshop title when participants are largely from one specific geographical location? Put another way, does the workshop strengthen civil society in *Fiji*, or does it (just) strengthen *Suva's* civil society?

The final consideration regarding the stakeholder workshop is the key intermediary, or 'workshop facilitator', who is chosen for their technical specialisation in the form and operation of the workshop and their proficiency in techniques of project management (see below 3.3). Facilitators are expected to produce the kind of analysis 'acceptable' to the funding agency i.e., to present the 'right kinds' of relationships between inputs and outputs "...supported by the 'right kinds' of indicators which are realistic enough to be convincing and which are consistent with agency policy priorities" (Green, 2003:135). The production of outputs follows clearly defined stages of facilitated work, which produce project documentation in a sequentially managed process. In this way funding agencies have certain

⁵¹ Singh (1994) argues that this concentration is not only geographical but also monetary. In other words, those among the "...elite consortium of NGOs" (1994, 256) gain the large share of funds made available through donors and government.

expectations of how workshops are to be managed and what is produced. The uniformity between the workshop examples in Tanzania and those conducted in Fiji attest to her proposition of the standardisation of development globally. In the following discussion I apply Green's (2003) analysis to examine the two stakeholder workshops identified above in order to consider a specific 'object' of intervention—civil society.

3.3 CIVIL SOCIETY AND CAPACITY BUILDING: THE STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC⁵²

...'[D]evelopment institutions generate their own form of discourse, and this discourse simultaneously constructs...a particular kind of object of knowledge, and creates a structure of knowledge around that object. Interventions are then organised on the basis of this structure...(Ferguson, 1990: xiv).

[Stakeholder] workshops, like projects, are units of management. As packages of inputs and outputs they run to clear schedules and aim to deliver outputs within a designated time period (Green, 2003:132).

As was identified in Chapter Two (2.2), civil society has emerged in the last two

⁵² Referring here to the Regional Workshop (CIDA/UNOPS, 2001) and the National Workshop (CIDA/UNOPS, 2002).

decades as a designated area of intervention in the development aid industry. Similarly, in the South Pacific, the hierarchy and position of the donor, like other 'development' settings, is effectively unconditional in that donors determine and frame the intervention or structure of knowledge (see below). This, in turn, perpetuates and standardises the capacity building process (see Mawdsley *et al*, 2002). The following series of interview excerpts from Fiji's aid industry capture the sense of inevitability in terms of this hierarchy and standardisation:

The word 'civil society' is being used more often now [in the Pacific] and that's been brought in by donors and development practitioners and whoever else...and other people [NGOs] think they have to use it in order to get money or whatever (Development Practitioner, Interview 1: 2002).

...[A]lot of the capacity building that's been done in the Pacific, and that would include Fiji and other countries, have been donor led, donor designed...[In] very few places or circumstances...NGOs have identified their own learning needs and [have] then been empowered to do something about it...[but overall] it's been too much donor driven...(Development Practitioner, 2002: Interview 1).

This happens in policy dialogue, this happens in practice...[W]hen you get people to the table [referring here to NGOs], you are getting people to the table that know the game...the people who are not coming are the smaller

community based organisations that are out there interacting in the community. They are cut off from the resources, from the policy dialogue...from everything else...So in a way donors are shaping what civil society looks like...by who they bring in and who they don't bring in...(Development Practitioner, 2002: Interview 1).

These 'voices' reflect an aversion to donor-led framing of interventions and a broader level of standardisation within 'capacity building' efforts, but there is also the question of the presumption of deficiency. Though its potential impact is not uncontested (Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Hulme and Edwards, 1997; Van Rooy, 1998), civil society is still largely viewed as an important force for developmental change, provided, of course, it has the 'capacity' to do so. In light of this, a defining feature of the representation of civil society by donors, particularly, has been to draw on oppositional delineations. Here, reference is to *weak* civil society defined against *strong* (read: 'developed') civil society institutions. In this parlance, and to use the familiar 'donor speak', civil society is invariably in need of 'strengthening' or 'capacity building'. This characterisation is also evident in the context of the Pacific. For example, according to a UNDP report on the Pacific it was noted that:

While NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) are playing an increasingly important role in many Pacific Island countries, their potential as partners in the national development process is often inhibited by their own weaknesses...(cited in Davenport, 2000:52).

Recalling Ferguson's (1990) quote above, civil society or NGOs in the Pacific are framed in the same standardised way and with the same presumption of deficiency as is found in other development settings. In the case of the 'object' civil society, this presumption forms the "structure of knowledge" (Ferguson, 1990: xiv) that surrounds it along with necessary cures and ways of implementing these. The structure identified by Ferguson (1990) is reflected in the titles of both workshops in question: the Regional Workshop, *'Strengthening Civil Society in the Pacific: Toward Greater Inter-Agency Cooperation – 2nd Regional Stakeholder Workshop'*; and the National Workshop, *'Strengthening Civil Society in Fiji: Towards a National Plan of Action'*. The point I want to highlight in this section is that the language of managerialism and deficiency embodied in the workshop frames the initial actions to be undertaken and underpins the agenda and outputs.

The Regional Workshop, *'Strengthening Civil Society in the Pacific: Toward Greater Inter-Agency Cooperation – 2nd Regional Stakeholder Workshop'*, was conducted as a follow-up meeting from a previously convened workshop held in 2000 in Port Vila, Vanuatu. This first stakeholder workshop on 'NGO Capacity Building' brought together NGOs, donors, governments and other agencies and institutions in the region. Five 'Action Areas' were identified at the Port Vila workshop as key issues and priorities. The five areas were; organisational development, information sharing and communication, NGO sustainability and funding, stakeholder relations, and legal and regulatory frameworks. The Regional

workshop objectives were determined by these Action Areas, with one of the primary stakeholder objectives being to “reach agreement and endorse a Strategic Framework for strengthening civil society in the Pacific” (CIDA/UNOPS, 2001: 8). The production of the Strategic Framework to ‘strengthen’ civil society was highly circumscribed not only by the managed agenda of the workshop programme, particularly in terms of the timeframe for discussion groups and plenaries, but also in the production of resolutions. The institutionalised management language sought ‘expected outcomes’ (i.e., subsequent workshops), while the workshop itself was the embodiment of these standardised (structured) knowledges.

Unlike the regional workshop, which was conducted as a follow-up evaluation, the national workshop was an initial consultation aimed specifically at ‘strengthening’ civil society in Fiji. Though the language of deficiency was less pronounced (but certainly evident) than the Regional workshop, the degree of standardisation vis-à-vis the agenda and outputs, was more apparent. In terms of the format and methodology, the National workshop applied the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI). The CSI is an action-research project aimed to assess the ‘health’ of civil society in countries around the world with the intention of creating a knowledge base and impetus for strengthening civil society initiatives. It also provides a tool of comparison between countries (Holloway, 2001). The CSI is a methodology for evaluating and ‘scoring’ four dimensions of civil society. The four dimensions of the CSI include: the structure of civil society, the environment or space in which civil society exists, the values held and advocated by civil society, and the impact of

civil society activities. Stakeholders in CSI workshops collectively produce indicators, in the form of statements, within each of these dimensions and are asked to express their agreement with each statement by providing a score from one to seven (with seven indicating that the stakeholder strongly agrees with the statement). The responses are then collated and transposed onto a two-axis diagram with each dimension representing one line on the two axes. A healthy civil society is represented by a diamond configuration (see Holloway, 2001 esp. 62-63; see Figure 2). Recommendations are then developed as the stakeholders reflect on the trend represented by the diagram and an Action Plan is designed.

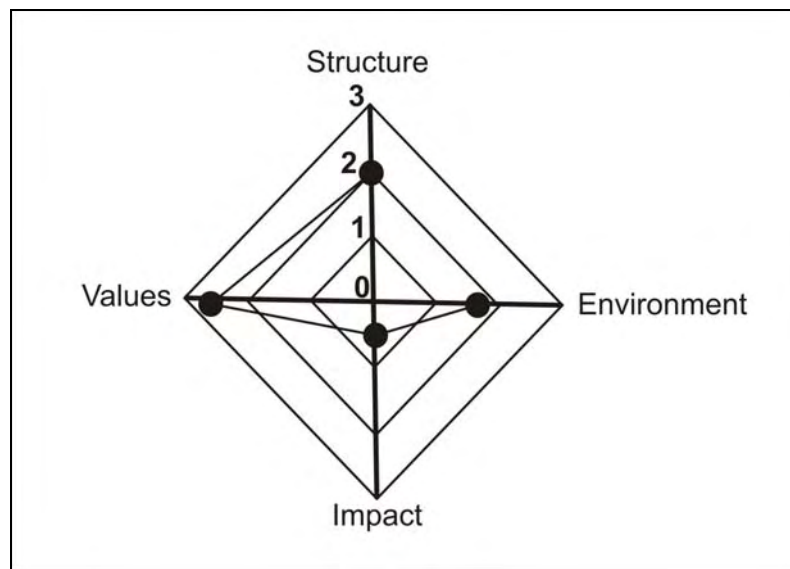


Figure 2: Civil Society Diamond (Source: Holloway, 2001: 62)⁵³

The specifics are less important here than the ‘managed’ agenda and prescribed outputs generated. The targets for ‘strengthening’ are those areas of civil society ‘under-performing’ according to the four dimensions—according to the core

dimensions assumed to be universally applicable indicators by the CSI (see CIVICUS Summary of conceptual framework and research methodology, page 13. Available at www.civicus.org). One prescriptive feature of the CSI Handbook is that it pre-emptively announces ‘necessary components’ for its plan of action. For example, when suggesting measures for a “concrete action agenda” (Holloway, 2001:66), it unequivocally states that the measures “...have a clear description, a clear target, a clear responsibility and a clear timeline for accomplishment” (Holloway, 2001:66-67). Though the diamond configuration does not feature in the National workshop report, the format (small group discussions) and methodology adopted (including core indicators and ‘outputs’) in the National workshop reflect the standardisation highlighted by Green (2003). Indeed, the CSI is an elegant example of the managerialism depicted in Green’s (2003) account of the workshop as units of management with packages of inputs and outputs running to clear schedules.

In their paper on NGO capacity building and sustainability in the Pacific, Low and Davenport (2002) identify the potential consequences of externally-driven interventions. To Low and Davenport (2002), attempts to ‘strengthen’ civil society in the Pacific would ultimately fail if capacity building was “...reduced to a notion of pre-packaged training” (2002, 377). As the examples of the national and regional workshops show; more of the same, that is, more workshops in the form represented here, as pre-determined and armed with the presumption of deficiency

⁵³ This figure shows an example of a country’s ‘score’ against the four indicators.

and hint of paternalism, simply perpetuates a very specific version of development planning and management. Though rather cynically put, one interviewee voiced their aversion to capacity building's standardisation in this way:

[The] problem with some multilaterals i.e., UNDP [is that] they continually run workshops and talk and analyse...we don't want workshops! [W]e want community-based projects that contribute to change. [It] seems that UN and other bilaterals have this general list of things to do and just 'tick-the-box' when 'capacity building' or another workshop [is] completed" (NGO Representative, Interview 1).

3.4 ROLE OF THE WORKSHOP FACILITATOR IN A 'CULTURE OF CONSULTANCY'⁵⁴

But it is not only that 'development' interventions draw on a small and interlocking pool of personnel. More fundamental is the application in the most divergent empirical settings of a single, undifferentiated 'development' expert (Ferguson, 1990: 258).

What counts as professional expertise in development is not primarily founded on in-depth geographic knowledge about other places and people, but is located in technical know-how. This new kind of development skill is

⁵⁴ The term 'culture of consultancy' is borrowed from the title of a paper by Stirrat (2000).

increasingly recognised globally and reflects the universalising principles of the neoliberal agenda (Kothari, 2005: 430).

The privileged position of the development ‘expert’ is predicated on the assumption that certain peoples and nations are in a lesser state to that of the world’s ‘developed’ countries, and that the latter invariably hold the expertise to help the former (Abrahamsen, 2000; Escobar, 1988; Hobart, 1993; Kothari, 2005, 2006; Parpart, 1995). Porter (1995) suggests that this transference of knowledge was less in response to a call for help, “...than an initiative designed according to a larger pattern of need, projects and sectors consistent with the functional prerequisites of the master metaphor [read development discourse]” (1995, 72).

Stirrat (2000), in a cogent reassertion of this now widely accepted critique, grounds this assumption in the activities of development consultants. Highlighting an emergent ‘culture of consultancy’, Stirrat (2000) considers the consultants work as one of penetrating to the ‘truth’—with the truth constituted as a specific rational set of knowledges based in Western history and encapsulated, in the case of development, in neoclassical economics (see also Mitchell, 2002 esp., 37–53). What Stirrat (2000) does is recognise the highly prescribed production of knowledge embodied by professionals in stakeholder workshops and the work of development consultants. Though there are obvious differences, I use ‘expert’, ‘facilitator’ and ‘consultant’ somewhat interchangeably in this section because I am interested in how these individuals, among all those involved in the development

aid industry, derive their own special quality and prestige. With this in mind, I provide a brief historical narrative of how ‘experts’ come to be so revered in the development aid industry and show what specific knowledges they possess (while others do not). I also describe the actions of the “undifferentiated ‘development’ expert” (Ferguson, 1990: 258) in the case of Regional and National stakeholder workshops. I conclude this section by adding that it is the discourse surrounding the intervention, in this case the logic of project management as congruent with development discourse, that largely structures proceedings *and* the expectations placed on both the facilitator and convening organisation.

Expertise and the role of the ‘expert’ in development has a protracted and clearly delineated historical path, underpinned by the unflagging twin assumptions of Western technical dominance and moral superiority (Parpart, 1995). Embedded in Enlightenment thought (which evolved throughout Western Europe in the eighteenth century) was the belief that through the application of rational, scientific analysis the problems of life were solvable (Sahlins, 2000; Smith, 1999). Indeed, the supernatural was no longer seen as an obstacle to hu(man)kind’s efforts to understand and control nature (Parpart, 1995). Scientific knowledge and methods were increasingly viewed as tools of ‘progress and prosperity’ enabled through rational (male) individuals (Smith, 1999; Foucault, 1986; Gutting, 1989). Embodied in the industrial revolution and the rise of liberalism, the Enlightenment project played its part in the proliferation of specialised knowledge and the subsequent creation of separate disciplines within the academy (see Chapter Six regarding the

discipline of Geography). Parpart (1995) identifies how specialised knowledge was associated with the rise of the middle classes, which acquired status and authority as bearers of this new knowledge. This, she suggests, was in contrast to the nonspecialist 'renaissance man' or humanist. Foucault's (1980) contribution is insightful here in that his various works demonstrate how different institutions of learning and other structures of state control offered employment and authority for the new middle class professionals. The legitimacy bestowed on these professional classes was based on a belief in their ability "...to define and transmit the scientific knowledge/truth needed by the modern world" (Parpart, 1995: 223). Importantly, Western Scientific knowledge became universally valid and self-regulating as the acquisition of 'appropriate' knowledge—based on scientific testing and experimentation and certified through university education, degrees and the like—provided both a means of controlling access to this class and a way of empowering (only) those who had been sanctioned with authority to apply this knowledge to discipline (regulate) society (Parpart, 1995). According to Foucault (1980), these sanctioned individuals became the guardians of regimes of truth and pivotal contributors in the creation of Western modernity. The presumption of moral superiority, underpinned by social evolutionary thought (Crewe and Harrison, 1998 esp. 25-30; Sahlins, 2000), was equally fundamental to the view of the West as the highpoint of human endeavour and the ultimate litmus test of 'civilisation' (Parpart, 1995). Thus, civility was equated to the extent to which Western institutions and culture was adopted, and Christianity as predominant among these. The 'science' of development economics, which maintained the presumption of superiority and

belief in the inexorable character of modernity/Western technical progress, was an offshoot of these earlier linear notions of progress. The belief in trained, qualified scientific expertise resulted in early experiments in Third World development during the 1920s and 1930s (Parpart, 1995).

Escobar's (1988, 1995) Foucauldian explanation of the professionalisation and institutionalisation of development provides a critical account of the pre-eminence of the development expert and the institutional sites from which they operate. The concept of professionalisation refers to the inclusion of the Third World into the political realm of expert knowledge and Western science broadly. Through various techniques, strategies and academic disciplines (especially development economics), methods of research, teaching and criteria of expertise were generated and validated⁵⁵ (see Chapter Six). In other words, for Escobar (1995) the generation of "...mechanisms through which a politics of truth is created and maintained, through which certain forms of knowledge are given the status of truth" (1995, 45). The 'truths' that ensued were based on the technical prowess of development economists and practitioners, measured against calculations of coefficients (supplemented by universal standards to determine real needs) (Porter, 1995) and propelled by a considerable apparatus: development's institutional field. Institutionalisation of development is imbricated with processes of professionalisation, which took place at all levels. This network of power included international organisations, national planning and development agencies (in the

⁵⁵ Foucault (1972:50) referred to this as the 'criteria of competence'.

Third World), international consultant services, community development committees, and voluntary groups and NGOs (Escobar, 1995). Through these networks, people and communities are culturally and economically conditioned to subscribe to certain behaviours and rationalities. Importantly, the knowledge produced about the Third World is utilised and circulated via this network of power through applied programs, conferences, consultancies and a myriad of other groups and relations (Escobar, 1995).

These processes and relations are evident in the Pacific's development aid industry, in particular, in the site of the stakeholder workshop. Whether conveyed in an operational capacity by the facilitator; externally, by the adoption of authoritative models produced by 'bodies of professionals' (such as the CSI in the case of National workshop), or through a definitive set of 'closing remarks', the position and authority of the development expert is manifest. As the key intermediary in the stakeholder workshop, the facilitator directs proceedings guiding discussion and ensuring dialogue moves according to specific themes. That is, according to the logic of project management with highly prescribed objectives and expectations. In the Regional workshop, for example, facilitators presented a brief outline of the stakeholder consultation process (i.e., defining the way consultation was to proceed) and an overview of the stakeholder workshop *objectives and expected outcomes*. Similarly, in terms of the closing remarks for the Regional workshop, these were assumed by the holder of a doctorate, thus fulfilling the expectation of an 'expert' summary of events. For the facilitator, the management of themes

(including the definition of the way communication is to proceed) and the expectation placed on facilitators is unambiguously declared in the CSI Handbook as the facilitator's tasks are outlined along with the responsibilities of the 'convening organisation'. The following excerpts from the CSI Handbook (Holloway, 2001) show the expectations placed on both the facilitator and convening organisation:

A good facilitator will *encourage creative thinking from the participants*, but will also have ideas to suggest *if the participants need stimulation* (2001, 51 emphasis added).

Once a group has agreed that the civil society sector in their country, region or district *is, indeed, under-performing along a particular issue or indicator*, the next step is to think what might be done about it... *The facilitator should steer discussion at this point toward the effects an under-performing civil society has upon all organisations that are members of the sector* (2001, 65 emphasis added).

The convening organisation *will need to be an organisation with convening power*, i.e. of a stature whereby people will be interested to come in response to an invitation from them. The organisation *will also have competence in organising a workshop, have the resources needed for the exercise and be able to find a good facilitator* (2001, 42 emphasis added).

These excerpts attest to the highly prescriptive and institutionalised language and practices embodied in the workshop and role of the facilitator. Moreover, and as the last point identifies, they also illustrate the expectations placed on the convening organisation by the funding agency (see also Green, 2003: 134-135). It is through these languages and practices—which build on the dense history of ‘knowledge transfers’—that development experts, facilitators, and consultants gain their special quality and prestige. But it is also through the discourse of development; through the “functional prerequisites of the master metaphor” (Porter, 1995: 72), that these individuals are conditioned to subscribe to certain behaviours and rationalities.

3.5 MANAGERIALISM’S DEPOLITICISING EFFECTS: THE CASE OF CAPACITY BUILDING

Reflecting on the UK’s development industry, Kothari (2005) identifies the increasing professionalisation and technicalisation of the mainstream neoliberal agenda. According to Kothari (2005), this “...technocratic and tool-kit approach to development has exacerbated the *depoliticisation of development...*” by limiting “...the effectiveness of critical voices and contesting discourses through their conscription into neoliberal discourses and practices”⁵⁶ (2005, 425 emphasis added). Townsend *et al* (2002) have also identified similar effects resulting from

⁵⁶ I return to this important point of the co-option of critical voices in the conclusion.

the incorporation of auditing techniques as part of a 'new managerialism' in development⁵⁷ (see also Desai and Imrie, 1998 cited in Townsend *et al*, 2002).

Speaking specifically on how this new managerialism manifests itself in the stakeholder workshop, Green (2003) emphasises the way it facilitates uniformity, imposes a very specific language, and envisions (through project documentation) highly prescriptive outcomes. In addition, project documents, "...constitute particular representations of development problems as amenable to particular interventions" (Green, 2003:129). In the following discussion I extend Green's (2003) analysis, drawing on Ferguson's (1990) influential work on development intervention in Lesotho. Here I intend to add a subsequent effect of the prescribed managerialism identified above. I argue that the prescriptive form of intervention, in this case the highly regulated managerial techniques used to 'strengthen' civil society, depoliticises the capacity building process reducing it to a technical problem and one to which no one can object.

Ferguson's (1990) study represents a fundamental critique of development and its 'instrumental effects'. Put briefly, and building on my emphasis in Chapter Two, Ferguson (1990) argues that as one of the dominant organising concepts of our time, 'development', gains its self-evidence through its own unquestioned truth-value. He uses one particular example to emphasise his point:

⁵⁷ Desai and Imrie (1998 cited in Townsend, *et al*, 2002) trace the development of the new managerialist agenda from the 1980s, in particular, the mainstreaming of selected private-sector management approaches and techniques into the development industry.

One argues about...the role of legitimate commerce in the civilizing process—not about whether...Euro-centrism is to be rejected (Ferguson, 1990:xiii).

It must have been virtually impossible, Ferguson (1990) argues, to have rejected the organising concept of 'civilisation' in the nineteenth century. Its self-evidence was to be found in the way it formed the framework within which argumentation took place. According to Ferguson (1990), this is the case with 'development' where:

[w]ars are fought and coups are launched in its name. Entire systems of government and philosophy are evaluated according to their ability to promote it. Indeed, it seems increasingly difficult to find any way to talk about large parts of the world except in these terms (Ferguson, 1990:xiii).

Ferguson (1990) is describing a form of discourse that simultaneously constructs a particular kind of object of knowledge, while creating a particular knowledge around that object (see 3.3). It is through this process that the development apparatus depoliticises everything it touches, Ferguson (1990) attests, "...all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power" (Ferguson, 1990:xv).

In the two stakeholder workshops in question, it is the consolidation of institutionalised management tools, CSI modelling (in the case of the National workshop) and the authority bestowed upon the facilitator, which consign 'capacity building' and 'strengthening' to a technical problem requiring a very specific form of intervention. At no time is the legitimacy of these highly prescribed and quantifiable management tools ever questioned or the credibility of applying these modelling techniques to "...the amorphousness of social reality" (Green, 2003:129) rejected. This is because managerial techniques, with their very specific set of languages and practices, become capacity building's unquestioned truth-value. Alternatives are only possible to the extent that they remain within the uniformity set by the CSI modelling regime or the 'guidelines' for facilitators.

In a similar way, the LFA and its generic product the LFM (3.1), structures the knowledge that is produced. Again too, the necessity of 'measurable quantification' and formulaic matrix limits the available choices (alternatives) by providing the framework within which argumentation takes place. Within this model there is no potential or opportunity for the approach to be rejected. Indeed, it is the formalities and technical language that renders these models and development sites 'depoliticised'. The fact that what is being conducted in these examples is a political operation set within the ambit of 'good governance'—the latest manifestation of neoliberalism—is not in question. The LFA and stakeholder workshop represent a model and site where donors define problems and provide

ready-made solutions within the self-fulfilling and depoliticising logic of project management.

Maintaining this focus on specific language and its depoliticising effects, Kothari (2005), as mentioned earlier, views the increasingly professionalised and technocratic approach to development as limiting the effectiveness of critical voices by co-opting the latter. But additionally, the aloof nature of this highly stylised language, itself, reinforces the difference (and distance) between bureaucracies and supposed beneficiaries. The following interview excerpt aptly draws this point out:

Regarding the 'good governance' rhetoric...what matters at this level is language, writing reports etc. These are highly valued. [Though] what this approach seems to be doing is moving things away and out of range of lower income groups in Fiji, the actual people they talk about...(NGO Representative, Interview 1: 2002).

The representative highlights the way development discourse excludes those objects of delimitation—lower income groups, in this instance—from partaking in the form of dialogue so prized in 'donor speak'. In creating language only legible to the select few, 'good governance' beneficiaries are relegated to observer status. In other words, only certain people with certain knowledge and skills have import, thus the prohibitive style of 'donor speak' further depoliticised aid relations as

'participants' are removed as active agents in the discourse.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I provided Pacific examples of the productive features of development discourse. I identified the global standardisation of development planning and management, particularly how it is manifest in AusAID's project design and the functionings of stakeholder workshops in Fiji. I highlighted the fact that authorities are afforded the status to speak as 'experts' in the aid industry; namely, as facilitators and development consultants. I suggested that while they maintain a virtual monopoly on 'expert knowledge', a legacy with considerable historical weight (3.3), what they say and how they say it is largely subsumed within the discourse of development; particularly in terms of the way the latter frames and constrains what is said and thought within these development sites.

I concluded the chapter by arguing that it is development's productive features, in this case the technical logic of managerialism, including its language and models, that depoliticise the capacity building process. It is this depoliticisation that reduces the prospects of these processes being fundamentally challenged or the possibility of creative alternatives being generated. I also gave the example of the exclusivity of 'donor speak', arguing that this highly stylised language exacerbates the difference between bureaucracies and 'beneficiaries' and represents further depoliticisation of the development aid industry.

In focusing on one aspect of capacity building I am not implying that those involved in development project design or stakeholder workshops are unsympathetic to providing "...a distinctly Pacific-approach to building local capacity" (Low and Davenport, 2002:376). Indeed, as Green (2003) suggests "...those involved in planning development are well aware of the limitations of what they are trying to achieve..." (2003, 124). I would also add that a facilitator trained in postcolonial approaches, which is ultimately one of the methodological points advocated in this thesis (see Chapter Six and Eight), may not necessarily or automatically signal a move *beyond* the discourse of development propagated in these institutional sites⁵⁸. The substantive point I want to convey in concluding Chapter Three, however, is that the practices involved in development intervention are framed by development discourse often with constraining effects.

⁵⁸ What a focus on methodology may do, however, is produce individuals more sensitised to the *very specific* historical antecedents of *very specific* peoples and places (Kothari, 2005). Technical 'know how' might then provide merely an adjunct to the more pivotal emphasis on local knowledges and aspirations.

PART II

ENTER POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE

INTRODUCTION

In Part 1 I sought to investigate the density of the discourse of development in both broad (Chapter Two) and specific terms (Chapter Three) and to highlight the sites where these discourses are manifest and through which development's self-evidence is produced. The reason for this focus was to explore why it is so difficult to think in terms other than those considered 'common sense' in the development aid industry. I wanted to explain the certainty that pervades the statements made by those authorised to speak by tracing their substantial history. I also argued that this process depoliticises aid relations as development's framing and constraining features take effect. But while the evidence for this depoliticisation seems to be on the increase (Kothari, 2001; 2005), discourses are also, simultaneously, permeable and open to challenge. It is in this sense that Part II aims to foreground what postcolonial critique has to offer, particularly in the case of Fiji's aid industry.

Part II examines the various ways in which discourses are resisted, subverted and appropriated. Again, drawing on Foucault (1972, 1978 [1968]) I extend the application of his work to postcolonial criticism (specifically Ashcroft, 2001), starting with a focus on the contradictions, fragility and transformations to be found in discourses. Part II also emphasises the complex interplay of cultural identities; 'traditions', religion, gender and ethnicity in Fiji. This discussion is framed within a broader conversation with a considerable history in the Pacific; that between 'culture' and 'development'. The primary aim of Part II is to introduce the relevance of postcolonialism, not only for understanding development interventions and

adding nuance to broader development debates, but also as an analytical tool to shed light on the unique case of Fiji in the Pacific.

CHAPTER 4

Challenging development discourse: the case of Fiji

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I highlight the gaps that exist within development discourse and from which transformation and resistance emerge. Using Foucault (1972, 1978 [1968]) as my theoretical impetus, the first section sets up the main themes of the chapter and posits postcolonialism's critical heritage. Having identified one of the key thrusts of postcolonial critique—the potential of individual agency within discourse—I examine (in 4.3) a cogent example of resistance within a stakeholder workshop held in Fiji. Here I reveal the way dissident NGO representatives seize self-representation in order to assert Pacific ownership. In 4.4 and 4.5, I extend the analysis to emphasise the different ways that NGOs, donor representatives and individuals working in cross-sectorial capacities in Fiji also resist and challenge the framing and contraining features of development discourse. The common theme in these examples is the way they actively subvert the dominant active/passive binary that underpins the prominent and hegemonic position of the donor. Importantly though, I also highlight (in 4.5) the way individuals working within donor agencies and across government in Fiji critique the dominant positions largely advocated within these institutional sites. The existence of these critical perspectives challenge the more doctrinaire postdevelopment accounts that view donors and government representatives as only capable of espousing one dominant discourse.

4.2 FOUCAULDIAN TRANSFORMATION AND POSTCOLONIAL RESISTANCE

The sovereignty of a discourse over the subjects it constructs or inscribes is a crucial issue for post-colonial politics and for any counter-discursive relationship, for *counter-discourse reveals that the fractures in dominant discourses may be more numerous and wider than one would expect* (Ashroft, 2001: 103, emphasis added).

Ashcroft (2001) supplements this observation with an equally useful question: is it possible for discourses to be permeating, totalising and negotiable at the same time? Despite criticism targeting his failure to provide individual agency within discourse (see Chapter Five), Foucault (1972, 1978 [1968]) does offer the theoretical possibilities to answer such a question. His work also enables the possibility of negation and resistance which emerge from the gaps and fractures of discourses. Recalling the rules of formation of a discourse outlined at length in Chapter 2, Foucault (1972, 1978 [1968]) understands these rules as an important first approximation. He adds to this a second approximation, whereby discourses are also identified by the existence of criteria, or conditions of possibility, of *transformation* and *correlation*. The criteria of transformation is the threshold from which “...new rules of formation come into effect” (Foucault, 1978 [1968]: 54), while the criteria of correlation is the ensemble of relations a discourse shares with other types of discourse “...and in the non-discursive context in which it functions (institutions, social relations, economic and political conjuncture)” (Foucault, 1978

[1968]: 54). This second approximation; these criteria or conditions of possibility, underpin his broader discussion on historical continuity and *discontinuity*. In this section I give a brief synopsis of Foucault's response to the traditional explanation of the history of ideas⁵⁹. I outline how his discussion of *discontinuity* (or *discontinuities*), contradiction and transformation signal an abandonment of the historian's duty to uncover cultural continuities and isolate causal mechanisms (Smart, 2002). I then consider how postcolonial writers, in particular Ashcroft (2001), have developed these Foucauldian insights to explore postcolonial resistance.

Foucault (1972) begins *Archaeology of Knowledge* with a scathing expose of traditional historical analysis. His focal point is the way historians have fixated on long periods and description of human development in terms of linear succession "...as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructable system[s] of checks and balances" (1972, 3). Instead of viewing societal development as guided by a master hidden hand, a grand underlying theory or spirit, which Foucault (1972, 1978 [1968]) attributes to the nineteenth century, he proposes innumerable histories. He urges that we relinquish the old questions of traditional analysis with their emphasis on vast unities like 'periods' or 'centuries' and to forgo the questions that seek causal

⁵⁹ It is difficult to be brief without being reductionist when it comes to such a central platform of Foucault's work. Nonetheless, some explanation here is critical to understand his ideas on discursive transformation and by association postcolonial resistance.

succession and continuity. A key feature of Foucault's (1972) rebuke of the history of ideas and explanation of *discontinuity* is his account of contradiction.

According to Foucault (1972), the history of ideas credits the discourse it analyses with coherence. Therefore, when confronted with an irregularity, incompatible propositions or concepts that cannot be systematised together, "...then it regards it as its duty to find, at a deeper level, a principle of coherence that organises the discourse and restores to it its hidden unity" (1972, 149). Moreover, for Foucault (1972):

[t]his law of coherence is a heuristic rule, a procedural obligation, almost a moral constraint of research: not to multiply contradictions uselessly; not to be taken in by small differences; not to give too much weight to changes, disavowels, returns to the past, and polemics...rather to overcome these contradictions, and to find the point from which they will be able to be mastered (1972, 149).

Contradiction effectively replaces coherence as an organising principle, and far from being an accident of discourse, actually constitutes its existence. It is on the basis of such a contradiction, Foucault (1972) adds, that discourse emerges:

[I]t is because contradiction is always anterior to the discourse, and because it can never therefore entirely escape it, that discourse changes,

undergoes transformation, and escapes of itself from its own continuity. Contradiction, then, functions throughout discourse, as the principle of its historicity (1972, 151).

This is what Foucault is referring to when talking about his archaeological analysis as more willing to talk about *discontinuities*, ruptures and gaps. Let us take the example of difference. For the history of ideas, difference indicates an error or obstacle which the historian must reduce in order to find beneath it a smaller difference and so on until reaching "...the ideal limit, the non-difference to the point of perfect continuity" (Foucault, 1972: 171). For archaeological analysis, the aim is not to overcome differences, to reduce the gaps but to analyse them, "...to say what exactly they consist of, to *differentiate* them" (Foucault, 1972: 171 emphasis in original). By differentiating or untangling the differences that lie within the ruptures and gaps of discourses we can reveal transformations in their specificity. If there is a paradox in archaeology, Foucault (1972) adds, "...it is not that it increases differences, but that it refuses to reduce them..." (1972, 171).

Foucault uses a number of examples from various disciplines to articulate his second approximation—the conditions of possibility of *transformation* and *correlation*. Let us look briefly at several of these. According to Foucault (1978 [1968]) there are three 'places' where one can find discursive change. First, *within* the discourse to its own *derivations*. In physics, a famous example involves the extension of the discovery of sound waves to the study of light (Hesse 1962 in

McHoul and Grace, 1993). If sound waves are propagated in a medium such as air or water, then so too must light waves. A new physical medium arose from this, the ether, in which light is supposed to move. As no equivalent of this hypothetical medium could be found, a wholesale set of changes in basic physical assumptions had to be made to account for the idea of light as both particle and wave. This rethinking—the so-called relativistic revolution—had to cope with the ‘failure’ of the derivation from sound (McHoul and Grace, 1993).

Second, discursive change may be found in the *mutations* of a discourse. To use Foucault’s (1978 [1968]) example of the eighteenth-century naturalist, a subject who operates within a discourse, or on whom the discourse operates, may alter positions. For instance, in this period the naturalist “...ceases to be a listening, interpreting, deciphering subject” (1978 [1968], 57) and becomes a ‘looker’. Methodologies are conducted according to visual perception, and sight becomes the primary instrument and inductive mode for the naturalist (McHoul and Grace, 1993). A third form of discursive or disciplinary transformation (called *redistributions*) may occur in between two or more discourses. Sociology in the 1960s was perhaps the most relied-upon discourse for social analysis, but its decline and fragmentation in the subsequent decades has seen it become less important than economics and a range of other specialisms in the social sciences (McHoul and Grace, 1993). So Foucault is interested in defining precisely what change consists of; the threshold from which new rules of formation come into

effect and the correlation or ensemble of relations a discourse shares with others and the non-discursive realm in which they operate.

As a final comment on archaeological analysis, and on how it differs from the history of ideas, I draw on an extended quote by Foucault (1972):

It is understandable that some minds are so attached to all those old metaphors by which, for a century and a half, history (movement, flux, evolution) has been imagined, that they see archaeology simply as the negation of history and the crude affirmation of discontinuity; the truth is that they cannot accept that change should be cleansed of all these adventitious models, that it should be deprived of both its primacy as a universal law and its status as a general effect, and that it should be replaced by the analysis of various transformations (1972, 173).

Returning to the opening passage, and as stated in Chapter Two, discourses are indeed permeating and totalising, but as I have noted through Foucault, they are also negotiable. Indeed, it is no coincidence that if we were to characterise the central themes of postcolonialism's critique of development, we would find many similarities between it and Foucault's critique of the history of ideas. For example, Foucault could be talking of development discourse and Rostow's stages of growth when referring to the 'old metaphors' of movement and evolution. Similarly, his call to 'cleanse' and 'deprive' universal laws and models of their primacy and

generalisable effects might easily refer to postcolonialism's move to challenge the certainties found within exclusively Western and ethnocentric development knowledges.

Having identified the possibilities provided by Foucault's second approximation and emphasis on transformation, let us look at these in relation to postcolonialism and resistance. Bill Ashcroft (2001) is one influential postcolonial writer who provides a distinctly Foucauldian explanation of postcolonial resistance. Ashcroft's (1995, 2001) work highlights the possibilities and potential of individual agency within discourse; the point of negation and resistance. It is the fractures in discourse, according to Ashcroft (2001), that define the spaces in which postcolonial resistance moves. Moreover:

...it is the territory of discursive rules, the borders which determine 'what can be said' and what cannot, where the fractures, overlaps and slippages of discourse operate most subtly...Discourses are never absolutely delineated, but are surrounded and penetrated by these porous borders, in which the tactics of choice, difference and resistance may come into play (Ashcroft, 2001: 112).

So for Ashcroft (2001), the fractures and shifts of colonial discourse identify the conditions of possibility for postcolonial resistance, not as permanent exclusion and opposition, but as the condition of its empowerment (see below). He refers to

colonised societies and the way they appropriate dominant technologies and discourses as a strategy of self-representation. Put another way, for Ashcroft (2001):

Underlying all economic political and social resistance is the struggle over representation that occurs in language, writing and other forms of cultural production (2001, 2).

Ashcroft (2001) makes the point that everyday practices in colonised societies demonstrate how postcolonial futures involve the subversion and reconstitution of discourses and technologies to local needs. Additionally, it is the counter-discursive agency of postcolonial subjects and the material and discursive dimensions of this process that is such a significant aspect of postcolonial futures. Transformation, therefore, reveals that the most effective strategies of resistance are those that avoid simple oppositionality and binaries, and instead adapt dominant discourses for the purposes of self-empowerment. In other words, an interaction, "...a counter-discourse, which is not one of exclusion and polarisation, but of engagement and rearticulation" (Ashcroft, 2001: 112).

In the following sections of Chapter Four I consider resistance in the context of Fiji's development aid industry. Not only can we see the processes mentioned above, such as the seizure of self-representation and adaptation of development

discourse, but we can also identify the gaps and contradictions from which these forms of resistance emerge.

4.3 RESISTANCE 'WITHIN' THE STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

...participatory workshops remain structured encounters *marked by hidden agendas and strategic manoeuvres* (Pottier, 1997: 203 emphasis added).

The view of development as a “monolithic hegemony” (Peet, 1998: 77) with development agencies representing an homogenous entity working over non-Western peoples, irrespective of time and place, has come under intense scrutiny (Green, 2003; Phillips and Edwards, 2000). Represented in early postdevelopment accounts (see Hobart, 1993; Sachs, 1992), these analyses have been increasingly challenged as more nuanced understandings of development processes have emerged. Phillips and Edwards’ (2000) discussion on development agencies, for example, illustrate this complexity when identifying the way numerous stakeholders; from administrators and professional advisers, to field-level project staff and intended beneficiaries; challenge, negotiate and renegotiate their way through the development process reflecting multiple agendas. Pottier (1997) highlights these complex processes in the context of participatory workshops in Tanzania when identifying the strategic manoeuvring and contested agendas that often constitute these development sites.

The Regional workshop on ‘Strengthening Civil Society’ conducted in Fiji in 2001 provides a cogent example of the resistance and transformation that ensued from a very public display of subversion. On day one of the three-day workshop “enacted in true Pacific style through eloquent dialogue and oratory” (CIDA/UNOPS, 2001:9), regional NGO representatives undermined the workshop agenda and met independently of donor stakeholders. In what was viewed as an “historic groundbreaking development” (CIDA/UNOPS, 2001:9) the NGO representatives snubbed the workshop format set by donors. As one participant recalls:

...[T]he whole thing [was] turned upside down and the NGOs got control of the meeting, which was great...[T]hey asserted their independence...[and] a lot of people liken[ed] it to decolonisation...[T]here was a parallel process going on [and] the NGO leaders themselves spent the whole workshop basically figuring out for themselves what their priorit[ies] were [and] how they wanted this process to work for them...[S]ome people who understand these processes, and understand colonisation/decolonisation were quite thrilled by it. Other donors felt [they were] like cardboard cut outs, watching someone else’s process and got a little cheesed off that they didn’t get to talk about their programs. [S]o not everybody was happy. But overall there was a breakthrough because it marked for the first time Pacific Islanders, in this context...taking control of their own development processes (Workshop Participant, Interview 1: 2002).

The actions of NGO representatives resulted in the original agenda being significantly modified. Their resistance to the workshop format challenged the relational hierarchies routinely understood in donor funded workshops (see Green, 2003:132-134). They also undermined the expectations donor representatives had in terms of highlighting their priorities and projects. Several points can be made here in terms of this challenging and negotiation of development discourse. In the past two decades or so the imposing and paternalist nature of development discourse has given way to less hierarchical and more bottom-up approaches being adopted in mainstream development aid programmes. This push was originally celebrated through Robert Chambers (1983) and others whose work was captured by the phrase 'putting the last first'. In other words, this approach sought to prioritise the needs of those being 'developed', which has since manifest itself as self or community empowerment (and variations of this). Simultaneously though, top-down approaches have remained a key feature or ethos of development policy, underpinned by a superior/inferior or active/passive binary (Eriksson Baaz, 2005). In this dichotomy, the development worker or donor is characterised as modern, open-minded and liberated, while the development recipient or beneficiary is not receptive to change; bound or immersed in tradition. This contradiction; this simultaneous existence of opposing approaches within development discourse represent a fracture or gap through which the conditions of possibility of resistance can emerge. In the case of the stakeholder workshop, the mere existence of the notion that the priorities of those 'being developed' should be taken into account, led, though begrudgingly, to donors taking a step back. To do otherwise or to have

attempted to 're-gain control' of proceedings would have been viewed as a further example of paternalistic top-down development practice.

The actions of NGO representatives subverted the active/ passive binary that underpin the intent of the workshop i.e., that establishes the donor as the authoritative provider of specialised (capacity building) knowledge and the NGO as willing receptor of this knowledge. One immediate effect of the actions was that for the remaining two and a half days of proceedings NGO commitment to 'Pacific ownership' of capacity building was endorsed through feedback discussions (which included donor officials) and the implementation of NGO-defined strategies for future collaborations (CIDA/UNOPS, 2001). Though not dispensing with the desire to build capacity, the representatives indicated a less prescriptive process focusing more on locally-generated priorities and concerns and less on donor-defined accounting regimes and ready-made solutions. By emphasising the aspirations contained in the notion 'Pacific ownership', the representatives were able to utilise the collective determination of participants for their own purposes and subvert their intended status as receptors of authoritative (donor) knowledge (see Duituturaga, 2001). Importantly too, the assertion of ownership was accompanied by an equally definitive position which suggested capacity building should not only involve 'change' on behalf of the 'objects' of intervention. The onus should also be on change within donor organisations (see 4.5 below); on building the capacity of donors. The kind of subversion represented by the workshop proceedings indicate, as one development practitioner from the region has suggested, a recent shift in

development relations which has seen donor managers more prepared to listen (Development Practitioner, Interview 2: 2002). Though Duituturaga notes that problems remain in that while people in key positions appear to have a genuine desire to work with the Pacific and look at development from a Pacific perspective “...they just don’t know how and that is what they are struggling with” (Development Practitioner, Interview 2: 2002).

A number of points can be made here. First, NGO representatives were not interested in rejecting the thrust of capacity building, despite the term’s own limitations and presumption of deficiency (see above 3.3). So while the NGOs subverted the relational hierarchies, as I have noted above, initiating a move likened to decolonisation, there was no outright repudiation of development or rejection of the workshop format per se. Rather, a sense of realigning or reconstituting of priorities where NGO representatives appropriated the routines and expectations of the workshop typically determined by donors. In other words, avoiding oppositionality, exclusion and polarisation, representatives enacted a counter-discourse of “...engagement and rearticulation” (Ashcroft, 2001: 112).

A second related point is that the primary strategic manoeuvre of the representatives was to seize self-representation which involved a forced self-reflexivity on behalf of the donors (see below 4.5 and Chapter Eight). Resistance, in this case, was not simply about altering a few priorities in a particular programme, but about seizing language; snatching the tools of representation to

assert Pacific ownership of development processes. This hidden agenda and strategy of seizing self-representation acknowledges, as Ashcroft confirms, that “...language is our mode of knowing the world [and] not merely its intermediary” (2001, 113) (see further Chapter Five). By interpolating the workshop’s ‘donor-speak’, representatives injected transformative provocation into this dominant global ‘site’ of cultural production.

4.4 NGOs AS AGENTS OF CRITIQUE

In 4.3 I highlighted one particular site of contestation; one specific setting where resistance emerged which challenged development’s self-evidence. In this section I continue this theme but extend it to consider other development settings, including the activities and philosophies of NGOs in the aid industry. I emphasise cases where development discourse’s contraining characteristics are resisted, negotiated and renegotiated (Phillips and Edwards, 2000). The main point in this section is to, again, expose the gaps, malleability and transformative potential of development discourse using examples of contestation and negation in the Pacific broadly and Fiji in particular.

The following quotes are from donor managers responsible for the formulation and implementation of civil society and capacity building programmes in the Pacific:

[Capacity building involves increasing the] ability of NGOs to meet donor requirements with respect to proposal writing, accountability [and] transparency...(Donor Manager in Duituturaga, 2001:16).

I think it is kind of important in civil society and the development framework that...we distinguish between NGOs as service providers and NGOs as transparency promoting...I think it is quite separate. So in Fiji we have almost deliberately separated th[em] (Donor Manager, Interview 1: 2003).

The main thrust of these quotes replicate the active/ passive binary identified earlier in the context of the stakeholder workshop. In this case, the donor is the one specifying requirements and expectations, while also defining the frameworks and categories which constitute the intervention. NGOs remain in the position of willing recipient.

The activities of Women's Action for Change (WAC), a community-based organisation that performs playback theatre throughout Fiji, challenge this binary and contest some of the prescriptive conventions that can ultimately limit the potential of CSOs to actually 'build capacity'. Playback theatre involves a re-enactment of a particular social interaction or exchange. Prior to a performance, community members from the audience anonymously recount an experience to actors and choose performers to play certain roles. The actors then playback, or act out, the story to the audience. On completing the performance the audience

collectively discusses the issues addressed. Playback constructs a set of practices that expose various forms of discrimination, while also acting to produce and rehearse strategies for personal (and social) transformation among its audience (see Houston and Pulido, 2001; Nagar, 2002). Following the 2000 coup WAC travelled to areas worst hit by violence and undertook its critical role of rehabilitating those most effected by the events through playback theatre (WAC Representative, Interview 1: 2002).

WAC's activities also challenge the distinction made by donors in terms of determining NGO roles i.e., as either a 'service provider' or a 'transparency promoting' organisation. For example, through its various performances WAC provides a strong educational role in terms of its interactive approach and emphasis on group reflection, while its psychological properties have definite and enduring positive health consequences. Additionally, the attention given to people in prison and to gay and lesbian groups demonstrate WAC's advocacy commitment to those "at the fringe of society" (WAC Representative, Interview 1: 2002). The co-ordinator of WAC highlights the concerns and frustrations presented by top-down prescriptions in the context of their community work:

These large institutions [referring to UN agencies and donors] want people to fit nicely into categories. The people that WAC work with i.e., people in prison, the homeless, the most marginalised, do not fit into these categories...[while]...the bureaucratic nature of funding proposal writing is

about whether the NGO or its concerns [again] fit into categories (WAC Representative, Interview 1: 2002).

When applying for a donor-funded round through the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS)⁶⁰, WAC was asked to 'put a brochure together' for the purposes of obtaining funds. WAC's co-ordinator replied to the request by stating that this is precisely the problem; "there are too many brochures" (WAC Representative, Interview 1: 2002). WAC explores the specificity found within individual communities as it performs and imagines collective futures (see further Chapter Five on this notion of collective futures).

Another NGO operating from a different premise to that which underpins the imperatives of donor accounting regimes is the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI). FSPI is a network of eleven national NGO members who work throughout the Pacific focusing on rural development. One FSPI initiative is the 'Voices and choices – gardening good governance and democracy in the Pacific' Project (hereafter referred to as the Project). According to FSPI's Regional Programme Co-ordinator the Project attempts to counter conventional 'top-down' and donor driven approaches to development:

[R]ather than being extractive, the approach allows communities to take control of the process where they are identifying their own problems and

⁶⁰ FCOSS is the national umbrella organisation for NGOs in Fiji.

solutions amongst themselves and in the community or elsewhere (FSPI Representative, Interview 1: 2002).

The Project is designed to stimulate thinking about planning at the local level and emphasises process and nurturing. The reference to 'gardening' itself aims to instil a sense of caring and productivity: both necessary ingredients to a healthy and fruit bearing garden. So at this elementary level, and as the Regional Programme Co-ordinator suggests, the Project is centrally about "...fostering a long-term vision" and addressing fundamental questions such as, "what are we developing to? And, how can we achieve this?" (FSPI Representative, Interview: 2002).

Specifically, the Project includes 'social mapping' exercises that assist individual communities identify effective traditional forms of governance that can enhance existing western systems. In this way the emphasis is on people defining key questions themselves, enabling them to "...reflect on their 'vision of the future' as it relates to local and national governance" (FSPI, 2002 emphasis added). This approach represents a reversal of existing priorities in governance programmes, as one leading practitioner in the region suggested:

A lot of [governance] programs...come in with preconceived ideas. [For example], they have a project and [say], the issue is governance, and this is some of the issues around governance. And this is what you should be doing to address these problems. [I]t is not led by these people themselves.

They don't identify [with] it...maybe their issue is that they want a space to play rugby! That's the big issue in the community (Development Practitioner, Interview 1: 2002).

In both cases, WAC and FSPI attempt to transform and adapt development discourse to suit local needs and priorities. For example, apart from subverting the active/ passive binary, WAC's method supplants the technical emphasis built-in to conventional donor-defined capacity building processes. So rather than being contained by the truth value of managerialism (see above 3.2) vis-à-vis the conventional input/output emphasis of donor programmes, WAC's performances and priorities displace the idea that an NGO's capacity building efforts should involve, as one of its primary aims, conforming to donor requirements. WAC's appeal and transformative value is in the interactive performance itself. Its potential to build capacity lies in the translation of community issues through theatrical prowess, group reflection, imagination and creativity. Such subjective and personal attributes confound the conventional categorisations which are central organising principles of managerialism.

While FSPI similarly confronts conventional top-down hierarchies, the Project poses a different contradiction for development discourse and strategy of engagement and re-articulation. Regarding the former, the contradiction emerges as new rules of formation (of development discourse) come into effect. In this case, the threshold is represented by the recognition that new questions need to be

posed and new (more appropriate) processes established and deployed. For WAC this involved different forms of capacity building; ones that subvert the permanent and coherent concepts at the basis of input/output techniques. Alternatively, FSPI's Project introduces or deploys new methods or ways of treating the 'objects' of development discourse. Communities or 'aid recipients' pose the questions. They are given the opportunity to ask; what are we developing too and how are we to achieve this? In other words, the 'objects' of development discourse define the meanings and processes, thus seizing self-representation and challenging the active/ passive binary.

In terms of engagement and re-articulation, FSPI maintains the language of good governance and democracy i.e., does not reject development discourse outright, but adapts it in an attempt to re-articulate the dominant 'built in' priorities. The strategies of resistance for FSPI involve avoiding oppositionality as it looks to the areas of convergence between western structures and more traditional systems of governance. For example, the Project objective aims to:

Identify and promote areas where failing or inadequate post-colonial structures [read: western-style democracy] can be influenced at local, provincial and national levels to provide a more Pacific-oriented consensual form of good governance (FSPI, 2001).

So rather than dismiss all the possible benefits of western-style democracy vis-a-vis postdevelopment, there is an acknowledgement of its existence and permanence, but simultaneous recognition of the necessity to locate central organising traditions and mores operating at the local level.

4.5 AGENTS OF CRITIQUE 'WITHIN'

While NGOs such as WAC and FSPI resist donor prescriptions from the 'outside', there are also individuals working with government departments, business and other organisations, as well as within donor agencies, that foster similar forms of contestation (Ellis, 2004⁶¹). In this section I introduce two examples from Fiji's development aid industry which challenge the view of government and large organisations as homogenous entities working over the poor⁶². The first involves an Indigenous Fijian women and trained sociologist working across business, government and development aid sectors. In the second example I tease out an interaction between donor representatives discussing a particular conflict resolution programme for Fiji during a group interview. Each case illustrates the way numerous stakeholders challenge, negotiate and renegotiate their way through the development process (Phillips and Edwards, 2000).

⁶¹ Ellis (2004) provides a useful internal critique of AusAID in terms of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

⁶² Being the premise of early postdevelopment accounts.

Apart from family responsibilities Laisa⁶³ is a community development worker, an advisor to Fiji's government, an academic and gender advocate, a development practitioner and a board member of a major Bank. Laisa is acutely aware of her position to initiate, both forcefully and subtly, change from within the structures of government and the development aid sector:

There are those of us who are strategically placed and we network...[at the regional and national level]. A person like myself, for example...sitting here in the heart of government giving advice to politicians, I just see that that is the cutting edge of development...that is really exciting! (Laisa, Interview 1: 2002).

Laisa's view of development in the Pacific over the past fifty years, and good governance as the most recent manifestation of this, is scathing and direct:

I stand back—both as an academic and development practitioner—to look at what development had brought about. Why is poverty at its almost highest? Why is there inequality? So it is very clear that equal distribution of economic benefits...has not been attended to [and that] all our models of economic growth have not been quite compatible [in the Pacific context] (Laisa, Interview 1: 2002).

⁶³ I have used the name 'Laisa' to respect the anonymity of the interviewee.

For Laisa, there is a specific understanding and methodology required to ensure better Pacific outcomes. In the national setting this will involve a comprehensive cross-disciplinary approach to getting the economics right. According to Laisa, there is "...an ignorance of how economic policies directly result and lead to inequitable growth" (Laisa, Interview 1: 2002). It is the lack of social analysis and self-reflexivity that hinders change, especially when those in positions of power fail to realise that they are contributing to the gap (between the rich and poor). If we are to continue to engage current economic models, suggests Laisa, economists will have to acknowledge "...the need for social impact analysis, gender analysis [and] the need for social monitoring programmes...[to ensure] equitable distribution of benefits" (Laisa, Interview 1: 2002). Laisa's concern regarding the role of donors in continuing this inequity is marked:

There is a slight conflict of tension in the sense that we have been driven – our reforms in the region have been driven by the World Bank, and ADB [Asian Development Bank]...models of market oriented, export driven economies...They don't quite make the connection that these reforms driven by market, export driven economies, it doesn't quite...it's not the answer for us in the sense that we don't have a private sector that's robust. We never had a manufacturing base for a long long time for as far as I can see. Government is our employer in the region. It employs 90 percent of the people. And if you slash it by half or three-quarters, I mean the country cannot do a thing...which is what is going on. So government must

intervene. And I have always believed that social justice is not up for tender. You can never expect the market place to do that...I have yet to see donors come to the table in recognition of that, I mean donors, we allow them to be here, we don't have cash so they bring cash, but we are all in danger of perpetuating this unequal situation [in the country] (Laisa, Interview 1: 2002).

In terms of advocacy, Laisa views civil society as the key mediating force and considers development NGOs as a catalyst in forcing governments and the business sector to reconcile these inequitable gaps and incompatibilities.

The second example is drawn from an exchange that took place during an interview with donor representatives. The dialogue reveals fundamental differences on the prospect of culturally-specific conflict resolution models proposed for a particular donor funded programme in Fiji:

Donor Rep. 1:...One of the things I would like to see is looking at the different ways that communities resolve their own law and order issues, law and justice issues...and try and work out...are there any commonalities between the way the many different societies in Fiji traditionally resolve those disputes. [T]herefore, build up on that basis an alternative dispute resolution system that might work for Fiji. Because I don't want to see Australia or New Zealand or who ever providing a model as to what has

worked in Australia or New Zealand, but if we have practitioners that can actually take them through that process of identifying what is common between the different justice systems of the indigenous groups...and by that I mean Indo-Fijian and Indigenous-Fijian, different faith-based groups as well, to come up with some sort of model that may work across the different societies...

Donor Rep. 2:...*sorry...I just have to say that we don't necessarily agree on this...because it could be that we end up supporting parallel systems [though] as long as they are with the same intent, I don't have an issue with that [though] I think that you [referring to Donor Rep 1] probably do...That is one of the things the program is about...[T]he lens that we will be looking through is—is this going to increase stability, reduce poverty, is it equitable?*

Donor Rep. 1:...does it provide fair justice?

Donor Rep. 2:...*exactly...so it does not matter that we don't necessarily have the same view on what this is going to look like...*

Beside the questionable prospect of a *donor*-defined alternate dispute resolution system, the prominence given to a collective process which involves identifying commonalities across difference by Donor Rep. 1, is notable. Contrast this with the understandings of Donor Rep. 2. The aversion to 'parallel systems' of conflict

resolution certainly has paternal overtones and smacks of an unwillingness to question the inappropriateness of donor models. But additionally, to maintain, as Donor Rep. 2 does, that the process matters less than the intent or objective (increased security, for example) is the key difference. For Donor Rep. 1 it is the locally generated less prescriptive *process* of identifying commonalities that should inform ways of resolving conflict situations in the country. Significantly, this more diffused position shares common elements with Pacific Island views on conflict. Preferring the term 'disentangling' over 'conflict resolution' or 'dispute management', Watson-Gegeo and White (1990) point to elements of local meaning:

To begin with, the notion of disentangling signals a process rather than an end product, indicating that entanglement in moral negotiation itself may be more significant than specific discussions of outcomes. Secondly, the image of a tangled net or knotted line suggests a blockage of purposeful activity, reminding the members of a community that the problem at hand requires attention lest it impede 'normal' social life (Watson-Gegeo and White, 1990:35-36).

In 4.4 I argued that WAC and FSPI attempt to transform and adapt development discourse in order to provide more appropriate interventions in the context of the Pacific. In the case of Laisa and Donor Rep. 1, we see a similar level of contestation and contradiction leading to new rules of formation. While FSPI

sought to alter the ways of treating the 'objects' of discourse; the community members themselves, Laisa changes the discursive 'object'. Reversing the active/passive binary, Laisa installs herself as the transformative agent, and the donor, the 'object' of development discourse. Laisa challenges donor managers by questioning the appropriateness of their intervention attaching a presumption of deficiency to the donor and their guiding concepts, in this case, good governance. In the excerpt below Laisa reflects on her negotiations with AusAID:

In terms of donor support, and I said this in Canberra...donors need to be challenged on their definition of good governance...[Donors] have to realise that good governance is not about a government system, it's about communities in a country taking ownership of what is in place. And until we have a vibrant civil society and we have vibrant local communities only then can you talk about democracy. So I am challenging, if you like...the word good governance, where [does] it come from?...So in that sense I reconstruct where this thing is coming from or I apply a critical analysis on who is using good governance for what. So I do challenge...and I said it to AusAID – you have a major part of your external aid on good governance and they have said that is because they see the systems of government falling apart in Melanesia, particularly. Well I said has it occurred to you to think who has been propping up this [system] for the past thirty year[s]? Does it occur to you that communities might be saying, well, we have had it

with this government system, we have not benefited from services that have [suppose to have] trickled down.

On the issue of engagement and re-articulation, again, Laisa takes an assertive, almost provocative approach, urging self-reflection and ongoing social analysis to underpin socially just development. Targeting neoliberalism's naïve promise of the trickled-down effect, Laisa holds a deep recognition of the fallibility of good governance. But equally firm is her acknowledgement, like FSPI, that as long as communities play a central role in defining the means and objectives of development, there is hope for more equitable outcomes.

The views of Donor Rep. 1 highlight a critical capacity working at the inception stage of donor programs. Like Laisa, the pursuit of cultural specificity heralds a shift from the dictates of good governance. In the case of Donor Rep. 1 there is a questioning of the capacity of introduced conflict resolution models to work in a different cultural environment particularly in the multi-cultural and multi-religious setting of Fiji (see Pirie, 2000). Again, Donor Rep. 1 targets the assumptions that underpin donor models refusing to accept the presumption of their cross-cultural applicability. In contrast to Donor Rep. 1, Donor Rep. 2 is concerned with the prospects of supporting 'parallel systems of conflict resolution'. The contradiction is in Donor Rep. 2's response. The latter argues that the lens through which we (the donor) will be looking will involve asking the questions; 'is this going to increase stability, reduce poverty, is it equitable?' The point that a culturally specific and

negotiated 'parallel system' may in fact provide such outcomes is not open for discussion. To Donor Rep. 2 the prospect of a 'successful' parallel system is inconceivable. Conversely, Donor Rep. 1, like Laisa, questions the appropriateness of their intervention which attaches a presumption of deficiency to the introduced conflict resolution models.

Though maintaining a level of paternalism and formulaic bent, Donor Rep. 1 calls for commonality and emphasises negotiated process. Avoiding binaries, in this case, that the introduced models are 'good' and parallel systems 'bad', there is an understanding of the need to 'hand over' the process and its representation. In other words, rejecting the dismissive tone guiding Donor Rep. 2's explanation and adopting a course that provides self-empowerment to those who are supposed to gain from the intervention. The emphasis on process illustrated by Donor Rep. 1 confirms the critical potential held within large development institutions and the possibility of an openness and willingness to engage different points of reference.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced both the relevance of Foucault to postcolonialism and the relevance of postcolonialism to understanding development's fragility and transformative potential. In terms of explicating this, Chapter Four emphasised the various ways that individuals working within NGOs, donor agencies, and across government agencies are actively subverting the binaries that dominate and maintain development discourse in Fiji. Several themes characterise these

examples of resistance. First, it is clear there is gaining momentum for Pacific ownership of development processes. Significantly, as was evident in the donor interview (4.5), cultural specificity is being taken seriously in those institutions that are also the prime movers of dominant discourses. Second, individuals working within Fiji's aid industry refuse to accept the presumption of cross-cultural applicability that underpins donor initiatives; whether capacity building workshops, good governance programmes or conflict resolution models.

Returning to Ashcroft's (2001) earlier question, yes, it is possible for discourses to be simultaneously permeating, totalising and negotiable. Though the more significant question, one I return to in Chapter Eight, what effect do these critical voices have on development's status quo? Indeed, does tinkering with the tool-kit, as Kothari (2005) puts it, represent the potential for substantive change to the neoliberal development agenda?

CHAPTER 5

Constituting development relations: identities and ‘the colonial present’ in Fiji

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four provided specific examples of the way development discourse is being challenged and resisted by individuals working in Fiji’s aid industry. I highlighted both the assertion of Pacific ownership, which inverts the binary thinking that underpins many donor interventions, and the emergence of newly constituted identities. The examples also undermined and exposed how difference is constructed and reproduced in development aid relations (see below and Eriksson Baaz, 2005). By emphasising local agency as individuals respond to development’s framing and constraining characteristics, I wanted to illustrate ways that postcolonial understandings of development processes ‘hit the ground’ in Fiji’s aid industry.

In Chapter Five I continue my postcolonial narrative focusing specifically on the complex interplay of cultural identities; ‘traditions’, religion, gender and ethnicity, in Fiji. The discussion is framed within a broader conversation that continues to argue that cultural specificities are central to ‘development’ and not just ‘fascinating’, as some have argued (Hodder, 2000 see below 5.2). Indeed, the South Pacific provides a rich and often complex story of the way people living in the region forge

new identities and operate in hybrid spaces which are not adequately captured or possible in economic explanations of development (see further Chapter Six).

I open the chapter arguing that any discussion of development, let alone intervention, must seriously embrace cultural considerations. I contrast the way economic explanations of development often marginalise 'culture' with the alternate view of culture as an integral element in development processes. In this way I stress the importance of an ongoing conversation between 'culture' and 'development'. This conversation is pivotal, not only because identity issues underpin aid relations and the understandings of those involved in development 'on the ground' (as I explain below), but, as Eriksson Baaz (2005) argues and as I presented in Part I, the identities of those doing the 'developing' also plays a considerable role in the way development interventions are framed in the first place.

In 5.3 I draw on interviews undertaken in Fiji to reveal how identity issues saturate the way development relations are understood and carried out. In the next section I deal with the seemingly ubiquitous spectre of 'the colonial present' in Fiji. The main aim of 5.4 is to emphasise Fiji's colonial continuities as a way of showing how the British colonial administration created a society where culture; understood as issues of identity, and development, whether colonial or post-independent, are intimately bound. This intimacy reinforces the need for contemporary development interventions to take cultural issues seriously.

I conclude the chapter by highlighting that while ‘culture’ and its multi-dimensionality is critical to explaining and doing development differently (see further Chapter Seven), it is also open to misuse. In this sense, I consider how the subversion of dominant discourses, which I outlined in Chapter Four as a positive way of expressing Pacific ownership, does not always equate to such a consensual and inclusive form of empowerment. In Fiji, the appropriation of indigenous and Christian discourses by those in powerful positions have led to the disempowerment and marginalisation of sections of the community; most notably Indo-Fijians. This examination challenges the more doctrinaire postdevelopment and culturalist interpretations of indigenous empowerment and rights.

5.2 CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT: AN INCREASINGLY PIVOTAL CONVERSATION

[A]nalyse which dig deep into a country’s philosophy, religion, customs, magic and the broad sweep of its history in an attempt to explain why people...come to think, behave and organise in the way they do are of course fascinating. The cultural characteristics they reveal may indeed help or hinder development. But they cannot explain or contribute towards an explanation of that development (Hodder 1992 cited in Hodder, 2000: 45).

Development intervention, which is certain to continue at least in the near future, can be more effective and beneficial to those people whose lives are being changed if culture is taken seriously (Schech and Haggis, 2000: xi).

Hodder (2000) continues his commentary suggesting that 'cultural explanations' are of little help in attempts to understand why one economy has been successful while another has not. As I will argue in this chapter, examples from the South Pacific, and Fiji specifically, reveal the limitations of this view and highlight the unhelpful binary that underpins such representations. At the heart of this and other economic accounts of development, as Hooper (2000; see also Kavaliku, 2000) asserts, is the way they counterpose economic rationality, good governance and progress against culture or custom, tradition and identity. And often accompanying these economic renditions is the view of cultural issues as either crumbling at the hands of development, static and therefore resistant to change, and/or cast in innately negative and parochial terms and hence threatening to social stability (World Bank, 2005)⁶⁴. Whether explicitly or implicitly, the dichotomy that is continually reproduced in these accounts are between 'good' (economic) development and 'bad' (non-economic) culture.

But these characterisations are not only severely inadequate and inaccurate in a place as diverse and multi-faceted as the South Pacific (Douglas, 2000; Hooper, 2000; Keesing, 1989; Norton, 2000; Overton *et al*, 1999; Overton, 1999; Sahlins,

2000), they also downplay, to borrow from Hodder, the very significant way that through a deep understanding of "...a country's philosophy, religion, customs, magic and the broad sweep of its history..." (Hodder 1992 cited in Hodder, 2000: 45) positive, mutually constituted identities and futures can be forged (see Chapter Seven on 'repoliticisation' in the case of Fiji's aid industry and Chapter Eight; see also Ghosh, 2004). This kind of 'reading' of development, of course, involves recognising both the way identities; 'culture', 'traditions', 'gender' and 'religion' are interwoven, co-constitutive and frequently shaped and reshaped (see 5.5 in the case of 'traditions' in Fiji) to suit specific needs, but also the way these identities are embedded in economic, political and social processes (see Schech and Haggis, 2000).

Herein lies the significance of postcolonial sensibilities when attempting to understand development's increasingly complex and subtle processes. As Schech and Haggis's (2000) quote above implies, and as I began to uncover in the previous chapter, for 'development' to be more effective and transformative, regional specificities (in the case of Chapter Four, Pacific ownership of development process⁶⁵) must form a comprehensive component of any intervention⁶⁶. In terms of broader capitalist processes in the region, the kinds of dichotomies and reductive characterisations mentioned earlier, are increasingly

⁶⁴ In 5.5 below I consider an example of this parochialism. Importantly though, by highlighting this example I am not suggesting that this accounts for all of what 'cultural characteristics' can stand for.

⁶⁵ And as I continue to argue in this chapter.

⁶⁶ I am cautious here not to imply it is a simple case of 'add' culture for 'better' development (see below).

diffused by the “indigenisation of modernity” (Sahlin, 2000: 47 – 58), the inflection of the market economy to serve indigenous sociocultural and economic goals (Curry, 2003) and, as Connell (2007b) asserts, the combining of ‘culture’ and ‘development’ in order to carve out hybrid futures that embrace innovative cultural continuities.

This is the conversation I imply in this section’s title. By continually teasing apart what is understood by ‘culture’ and ‘development’—discarding rigid identities and essentialisms, reclaiming what is co-constituting and inclusive—the prospects of envisioning alternative ways of ‘doing development’ will remain strong. As Schech and Haggis (2000) make clear, cultural issues must be taken seriously. Troublingly though, as Connell (2007b) asserts, “...[i]n all the detours of development, culture has largely escaped significant attention in the Pacific” (2007b, 130). In the following section I provide further evidence of this as issues of identity remain marginal concerns in donor policies despite interviewee responses from Fiji’s aid industry revealing the way cultural issues are integral to explaining ‘development’.

5.3 IDENTITY ISSUES: CONSTITUTING DEVELOPMENT RELATIONS IN FIJI’S AID INDUSTRY

Debates on development have been characterised by a silence about identity and how identities of international aid and development practitioners and planners shape development aid practice (Eriksson Baaz, 2005: 1)

Though key themes in development anthropology and sociology, issues of tradition, ethnicity, gender and religion remain marginal concerns to mainstream development studies. Perhaps more troubling though, this is also the case in the development aid industry (see Connell, 2007b: 117). Certainly, when it comes to donor strategic planning and good governance policies there is a general silence on issues of identity. Arguing against such omissions, this section highlights the extent to which tradition, ethnicity, gender and religion define the way development is conceived and understood within aid relations in Fiji.

In her important book on identity and development aid, Eriksson Baaz (2005) provides a postcolonial critique of the paternalism of aid partnerships. In it she argues that there has been a long neglect of the question of identity within development research and suggests this oversight has been the result of development studies preoccupation with economics and the previous dominance of neo-Marxism. Eriksson Baaz (2005) explains that this Marxian hangover has left identity, as a key aspect of development relations, to be considered as "...merely reflecting economic relations and thereby not a significant topic in its own right" (2005, 2). Taking donor and expatriate development worker identities as her point of reference, Eriksson Baaz (2005) explores how the partnership between donors and recipients, in this case, the Danish development worker and the Tanzanian partner, are characterised by the image of the former as open, trustworthy, organised and committed and the latter as unreliable, uncommitted and

disorganized. Her argument is that far from just reflecting economic relations, the meanings and workings of identities inform and shape development practice.

As I have suggested above (5.2), questions of culture, identity and development in the Pacific remain marginal in conventional development studies and the aid industry. Opposing this oversight, Douglas (2002) highlights why religion, race, and gender matter in Pacific politics (see also Ratuva, 2002). She stresses the way these issues “...are neglected by exclusively political or economic approaches and are often played down in international policy and aid discourses as merely social factors” (Douglas, 2002: 11). Douglas (2002) draws attention to the importance of religious beliefs in the daily functions of Pacific societies, the critical contribution of women in all social and political spheres, and the deeply historicised nature of race and ethnicity. Confirming Douglas’ concerns, these deeply significant issues in the Pacific are notably absent in current donor strategic planning in the region.

AusAID’s *Pacific Regional Aid Strategy 2004 – 2009* (2004), is a bold assertion of the Australian governments heightened interest in the Pacific. It marks out in clear terms what its current and future plans are for the region and acknowledges the necessity to ensure its engagement be “...tailored to specific country situations” (AusAID, 2004). Unfortunately, and as Douglas (2002) concurs, this recognition of the need for local contextualisation remains limited as the forces of neoliberalism retain their prominence in aid interventions (AusAID, 2002; AusAID, 2004; see also

World Bank, 2005; ADB, 2004). In a concise rebuttal of donor efforts on historical and cultural issues Douglas (2002, 11) argues that:

The framing and delivery of effective foreign policies and aid and development programs in this region demand cultural sensitivity rather than unreflective universalist presumptions and prescriptions (2002, 13).

For a key national text of policy intentions, AusAID's proclamations of specificity, in terms of contextualising their interventions, are disappointingly sparse on issues of tradition, religion, ethnicity and gender. Though the relationship between governance and issues of gender, race and religion are now being recognised by AusAID in the Pacific⁶⁷—particularly gender (Gallus, 2002), this recognition is not in any central way reflected in the subsequent *Pacific Regional Aid Strategy 2004 – 2009* (AusAID, 2004) document. While gender and tradition do rate a brief mention, the latter primarily in negative terms⁶⁸, ethnicity and religion do not. The following discussion explores the prominence of these issues in interviewee responses with NGO representatives, development practitioners and donor and government officials in Fiji.

While standard global imperatives of economic growth and political stability (to

⁶⁷ Parliamentary Secretary, Hon. Chris Gallus, MP identified these issues in the opening address of a development symposium on governance in the Pacific.

⁶⁸ This replicates old debates where tradition is seen as an obstacle, in this case related to corruption and insecure land tenure.

ensure the latter) underpin the model of good governance espoused by AusAID (2004), those best placed to shed light on the region's specificities have an all together different set of emphases. Commenting on a question on governance and Fijian traditions one interviewee responded in this way:

[I]n terms of good governance...I think that is the million dollar question here in the regional. How do we marry the western principles of good governance and democracy with the traditional structures which we have in the Islands? I think that is one of the major issues that everybody grapples with...(NGO Representative, 2002).

Another representative locates the question in relation to the 2000 coup and the subsequent, often heated, discussions that ensued:

[A]fter the 2000 Coup there was a debate that democracy doesn't suit the Fijian situation...[T]here were those against democracy going as far as to say that there should be a *vanua*⁶⁹ kind of model...I mean the extreme of it is that nationalist Fijians are saying that the whole thing [democracy] should be wiped off...(NGO Representative, 2002).

⁶⁹ Generally speaking, *vanua* refers to a tribe and locality (Ravuvu, 1991).

While the idea of rejecting Western concepts of government outright is an anachronistic one given our globalised world⁷⁰, the more common interviewee response involved marrying concepts. The following interview excerpts reflect both the importance of addressing this question and difficulties in doing so:

[P]eople talk about participation but they really don't know it. And I think that's where the discussion has to happen, around these issues of customs, democracy and where does local government fit into it. It just needs to happen down at that level. Trying to get things moving and get people involved and voicing their concerns and getting them to the right people to get that voice channelled up through the system so then it can trickle down again. It seems that this is the way everything is structured. Then you have got the parliamentary system and people get elected in (Development Practitioner, Interview 2: 2002).

[P]eople know the differences [between introduced law and customary law] and they know that they can clash but they are uncomfortable talking about it. It's almost like they are afraid, that it's taboo [or] disrespectful [and] people are not comfortable around it. Because people want to protect it, I guess (Development Practitioner, Interview 2: 2002).

⁷⁰ Though this did not stop the then Prime Minister Qarase arguing this point at a United Nations address in September 2000 (cited in Ghosh, 2004; see also below 5.5 regarding Rabuka's similar line).

I don't know if anyone does it very well to tell you the truth. I mean any project, any program driven from outside coming into a situation in a country like Fiji – I'm not too sure. I think NGOs do it better because they are more in touch with communities [and] they are from that cultural context. They have better understanding and appreciation [of the local conditions]. While NGOs based in Australia or NZ coming in probably do it better than the multilaterals (Development Practitioner, Interview 2: 2002).

The following interviewee captures the dilemma of not acknowledging the key issue cultural considerations in donor-driven good governance policies:

Good Governance doesn't recognise or contribute resources for looking at the Indigenous customs in our communities. How can it actually work within those structures in the Pacific? What do we mean by good governance when we have a traditional hierarchy structure...? (NGO Representative, Interview 2: 2002).

While 'traditions' are defining conversations within Fiji's aid industry, so too are other issues of identity. Gender, religion and ethnicity (see below) also play a significant part in the way people in Fiji understand what 'development' needs to account for and might involve. The following excerpts reveal that these specific issues of identity impact on the daily lives of people living in Fiji. Significantly too, the responses show the way these issues are interwoven and co-constitutive:

If you want to empower people (women) from the beginning we need to recognise the kind of cultural system they operate in. It [good governance] needs to be contextualised. This is our challenge...they [the UN, WB etc.] will talk to the men only at the community level (NGO Representative, Interview 2: 2002) .

They [donors] have to make a stand. [T]hey have to include in the donor guidelines that women are active participants in the design and implementation of women-specific programs and then they have to give it time to happen, especially as most of the leaders are urban based middle class and their constituents are working or rural class communities/ women. [T]here are many women's NGOs, clubs and groups, who have been working since pre-independence to improve the status of women in all aspects of society. [T]hese organisations...provided the early platform for women's voices to be heard. [T]hey gave birth to today's women's civil society (NGO Representative, Interview 1: 2002).

[R]ecently [there was]...a sexual harassment workshop and it was good that the government ministers picked it up. And there was this whole emphasis on creating a new policy on it. It's quite different when you are [talking with] a national government [though, as opposed to] a provincial government – provincial leadership, the cultural leadership. The difference has to be taken

note of. [For instance], while the national government can say yes, we can implement this sexual harassment policy, the provincial government will say well it's not part of our culture – our chiefs in the villages. So the gap, it's there. And I see the value of addressing the national government policies; but whether or not it will have an impact on the provincial and the village structures and policy makers in the village [is another issue]. So there is a gap and I'm not sure how the women's organisations' are addressing that (Development Practitioner, Interview 2: 2002).

Again, as in the case of 'traditions', the question of gaps and lack of contextualisation emerge. There is also a sense of reluctance, on behalf of the cultural elite; that is 'the men' in Fiji, to recognise the necessities of gender equity if they are to achieve broader political legitimacy (see further 5.2) ⁷¹. Reflecting the interwoven nature of these issues too, 'tradition' and gender also impact heavily on questions of religion and ethnicity in the country and command acknowledgement in terms of 'good' governance. To begin with, the powerful tradition/Christianity nexus plays a crucial role in maintaining existing hierarchical and patriarchal structures in Fiji. Similar oppressive hierarchies within Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religious doctrines also exist which espouse comparable views (with Christianity) toward women.

⁷¹ I would like to mention in relation to the point of the cultural elite being 'only' men; women too carry a similar elite position. For example, women from powerful clans have more status than men from lower status clans.

According to Douglas (2002), “[t]he academic, policy and aid communities...underrate the ideological importance of Christianity in nation making in Melanesia” (2002, 11). Douglas (2002) explains how in Fiji, Methodism, which is the denomination of around 80 percent of Indigenous Fijians, identifies almost exclusively with the indigenous tradition. In terms of politics, this has meant that some Methodist leaders have colluded with Indigenous Fijian religious and political fundamentalists. This is done, according to Douglas (2002), by “...seeking constitutional ratification of Fiji as a Christian state in which *tauvei* (people of the land⁷²) exercise paramountcy over non-indigenous communities, especially Indo-Fijians” (2002, 11; see 5.5; Douglas, 1998; Weir, 2000). Concern of indigenised Christianity and its effects on societal relations were repeatedly expressed by those involved in Fiji’s aid industry as the following excerpts reveal:

We are constantly talking about a just, compassionate and inclusive society. And all these human rights groups are very much along these lines. But unfortunately...the Methodist Church have really been using Christianity to support ethno-nationalism among Fijians (NGO Representative, Interview 1: 2002).

It’s the biggest challenge for me right now...I come from a Methodist background myself...the religious institutions are very patriarchal in their decision-making, and the recent debate on the whole Family Law Bill issue

⁷² That is, indigenous Fijians.

has just shown that very clearly. Our challenge to those institutions is, well ok, if you are going to speak as 'the church', or 'this religious group' or 'that religious group' be very clear in your consultation process. Are you talking to the women? Are you talking to the youth? [B]ecause too often the patriarchs of the religious institutions make the decisions...[These] religious institutions...set up their women's sections like the Methodist Women's Family or the Fiji Women's Muslim League and others and say well that's fine. So the women actually function quite well, but its [not] mainstreaming and sharing the decision-making...(NGO Representative, Interview 1: 2002)

[A] TV commercial started last week and it's been advertised by the Ministry of National Reconciliation. It's in view of tomorrow's celebration of Fiji Day [and it] uses the song of one of the new [Christian] religious groups [and] it played for the duration of the advertisement...It had crosses on it and [at] the end of it, it says, 'let's celebrate Fiji Day'. The impression is that to celebrate Fijian Day you had to be a Christian (NGO Representative, Interview 2: 2002).

These excerpts raise several issues relating to identity, development relations, and good governance. As Douglas (2002) suggests, and as I have shown above and in previous excerpts, Indigenised Christianity, particularly the fundamentalist kind which appears to reign in Fiji, structure the way social relations are undertaken. Those in positions of power and harbouring ethno-nationalist sentiments determine

whether or not consultation is to be carried out inclusively or exclusively. So it is the constructed 'identity' of the indigenous elite, emboldened by a sense of tradition and authenticity, accompanied with religious purity (see below, 5.4), that hold the countries decision making processes. This makes, as Douglas' (2002) declares, "Indigenised Christianity arguably the key national symbol in these states [referring here to some Pacific nations including Fiji]" (2002, 11).

As a final comment, then, it is the workings of identities, in this case, the interwoven operations of traditions, religion, gender and ethnicity, that inform and shape development practice. Though it needs to be stated that I am not arguing that 'culture' represents an obstacle to development as some economic accounts imply (see 5.2). Rather, I see them as deeply constitutive of development relations, where issues of identity are key elements to explaining 'development' in the region and in Fiji⁷³. The frequency with which identity issues underpinned the interviewee responses of those working within Fiji's aid industry reinforce that while marginal in donor policies, conversations of culture's role in 'development' is a central one. In the following section I want to explain and contextualise the origins of these identity issues and outline their unique development and current manifestation in the country.

5.4 FIJI'S COLONIAL PRESENT

Steven [Ratuva]⁷⁴ wrote last year...on ethnic divisiveness and religious divisiveness and the history that he gives is very good – very much to the point. [I]t is something that has been [in Fiji] since the British...the way the British kept both communities apart. But that separateness has been perpetuated under the colonial government, under independent governments and there has been very little effort to really bring people together. So that is one of the big big problems. Steven brings out fairly well that Fijian institutions were mostly colonial creations, but in the minds of Fijians they have been there for all eternity (NGO Representative, Interview 1: 2002).

In this section I trace Fiji's historical legacies in order to shed light on its colonial present. I highlight that many of the current institutions and contentions in the country were inherited from British colonial rule and subsequently perpetuated by later colonial and independent governments. Having emphasised the spectre of the colonial present, I underline the shaky grounds on which current appeals to indigenous authenticity are based. Outward manifestations of these in terms of Fiji's uncertain political climate are then considered in 5.5.

⁷³ I discuss in Chapter Seven that a thorough understanding of these do not simply explain development but also contribute to constructing locally specific futures.

⁷⁴ Steven Ratuva is a prominent Indigenous Fijian academic.

In Fiji, the colonial era continues to define the present political, economic and social milieu of the country. Decisions made in the late 19th century, particularly by the first governor of Fiji, and later British policies of institutionalised 'ethnic separateness', combined with Christian missionary activities, have the most notable presence. In terms of the imperial priorities of the time, the colonial period in Fiji is to be viewed in the context of intense economic imperatives, particularly agricultural enterprises, and concern over adequately furnishing the labour needs of an expanding empire. This was the circumstances within which the first governor of Fiji, Arthur Gordon⁷⁵, found himself in 1875. Indeed, Gordon's diaries, published in 1904, provide a rich and revealing account of the many issues of daily life in the British colony in the 1870s. An excerpt from his introduction to the volume offers an interesting insight into the unique level of autonomy he was granted by the administration in London:

[O]n the whole, the Colonial Office gave me a fairly free hand, and allowed me to do much that must have vexed the souls of those who worship red tape and precedent⁷⁶ (Gordon, 1904: iv).

As I have identified, the pressing concern of the day was the commercial viability of the colony. While copra and cotton were the primary exports in this period (1875 – 1881), it was sugar production that eventually prevailed in the subsequent decades

⁷⁵ Gordon was not knighted till later in his career.

as the soil and climate were highly compatible and international demand was strong (Colaco, 1957). Having already served as Governor in two British colonies⁷⁷, and been instrumental in securing Indian or 'coolie'⁷⁸ labour there, Gordon was a strong advocate for India to be the source of immigration for Fiji. This fervent belief was again evident in a message to the legislative council where Gordon's priorities are clear along with the origin of the labour source:

[I]t is hazardous in the extreme for the planters of the colony to rely exclusively on so manifestly precarious a supply of labour...and that Polynesian immigration must be supplemented, if not ultimately superseded, by immigration from other quarters, especially from India (Gordon in Colaco, 1957: 98).

As a result of Gordon's initiatives, from 1879 over 60,000 indentured labourers were recruited from India, which ensured the financial viability of the colony's developing sugar industry (Lal, 1998)⁷⁹. Along with the priority to secure labour was the necessity to secure land for sugar cultivation. The cession of Fiji to the Colonial Crown in 1874 marked a period of considerable change, not least in the

⁷⁶ According to Gillion (1962), one reason why Gordon carried such weight in London was his influential connections and the fact that he was the youngest son of Lord Aberdeen. Indeed, he was specially chosen by the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon.

⁷⁷ Trinidad and Mauritius.

⁷⁸ 'Coolie' was commonly used to describe Indian sourced labour.

⁷⁹ The effects of the experience of indenture was largely one of pain and hardship while the disproportionate number of Indian women, in particular, intensified consternation among Indian men. These histories have only more recently come to light especially with the work of Lal (1983, 1985, 1998). Despite these accounts there are those with less sympathetic views of the indenture labour system and presence of Indians in Fiji (see Ravuvu, 1991).

reorganisation of land for commercial purposes. This involved formalising the leasing of 'native' land into 30 year leases whereby land became a traded commodity. In order to do this, colonial authorities transferred property rights to the *mataqali*⁸⁰ whose land boundaries were mapped and 'owners' recorded and regulations drafted (Batibasaqa *et al*, 1999). Significantly, these measures ignored the more flexible customary land tenure system (see Ward, 1995, Ravuvu, 1991). So while this formalisation prevented the alienation of native land, which had occurred up until cession, the new colonial administration inadvertently eroded the traditional power of the chiefs by implementing these land measures. The main point here, though, is that the indentured labour system and Gordon's sensitivity to native populations⁸¹, and subsequent land reorganisation, were to be Fiji's most influential legacies.

Another defining feature of the colonial administration during the late 19th century was their emphasis on 'ethnic separateness' whereby the two main communities were encouraged to develop along separate economic paths (Kumar, 1997; Robertson, 1980). Moreover, a 'protective labour policy' initiated by the colonial authorities ensured that Indigenous Fijians did not have to engage in arduous labour activities (Prasad *et al*, 2001; see also Lal, 1998)⁸². As Gillion (1962)

⁸⁰ *Mataqali* describes the most important landholding unit in Fiji. Members of the *mataqali* are related through the patrilineal line and allocation goes directly to male members (Ravuvu, 1983).

⁸¹ Which was quite uncommon during this period of British Imperialism (see below). Gordon showed similar concern while governor in Trinidad and Mauritius. Though it should be stated that there was never any question over who was in the dominant position vis-à-vis the British administration (Gordon, 1904; Ravuvu, 1991).

⁸² Interestingly, a number of chiefs at the time expressed their opposition to the use of Fijian labour (Colaco, 1957; Lal, 1983)

suggests, it was Gordon's "imposition of restrictions upon the engagement of Fijian labour" (1962, 6) that ensured the perpetuation of this division. Again, this policy stemmed from Gordon's fascination with the plight of native peoples and his genuine concern with the challenge that Western civilization presented for them (Lal, 1983). According to Gillion (1962), "some [governors] accepted the decline as inevitable but Gordon regarded the task of saving the Fijian race as a mission" (1962, 5). This protective inclination also structured the way the political realm was to take shape.

Gordon's protectionist preoccupation also defined Fiji's political arrangements⁸³. His move to create a system of indirect rule through the country's chiefs is widely acknowledged (Colaco, 1957; Lal, 1983; Lawson, 1997; Gallion, 1962). The system involved maintaining the authority of chiefs by preserving traditional social structures and customs and embodying these into a separate code of laws (Gillion, 1962). Reflecting the authority with which Gordon bestowed on Fiji's chiefs was the establishment of the Great Council of Chiefs⁸⁴, which was designed to be a centralised guardian of indigenous interests (Robertson and Sutherland, 2001) and consisted of high chiefs from Fiji's hitherto disunified confederacies.

As I have emphasised, the policy of ethnic separateness introduced by the colonial administration contained assurances to preserve indigenous traditions and

⁸³ It should be noted that there was a pronounced Eastern/Western division in terms of chiefly presence in the Gordon-led integration of Fiji with the former predominant. Indeed, of the twelve high chiefs who signed the Deed of Cession, eleven were from the eastern districts.

customs, including the Great Council of Chiefs, while discouraging the emergence of multi-ethnic interest groups (see Ratuva, 2002). This division evidently led to an over-representation of Indigenous Fijians in government, including the military, police force and administrative positions. Conversely, there was an under-representation of Indigenous Fijians in the capitalist economy⁸⁵. Prasad *et al* (2001) argue that the maintenance of ethnic-separateness by the British colonial administration, and I would add Gordon in particular⁸⁶, became the organising principle of Fijian society and politics.

A second significant historical legacy in terms of Fiji's colonial present was the 'civilising' efforts of missionaries and their success at gaining converts to Christianity. In Oceania more broadly, the theme of missionary Christianity was to bring 'light' to the 'darkness' of heathenism (Jolly, 1997). Indeed, for Tomlinson (2004), this move signified an age of Christian Enlightenment. Despite its slow beginnings in Fiji, the activities of Christians had a pervasive impact on traditional practices in the country from the early 1800s. These incursions, according to Batibasqa *et al*, (1999) represented, "...an attack on pre-existing religions and beliefs" (1999, 104). Missionaries dismissed the notion that there were a series of spirits related to the physical elements of nature. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) notes how indigenous peoples in the Pacific had a very different concept of spirituality compared with Christians:

⁸⁴ The *Bose Levu Vakaturaga*.

⁸⁵ As opposed to the subsistence economy.

[T]he essence of a person has a genealogy which can be traced back to an earth parent, usually glossed as an Earth Mother. A human person does not stand alone, but shares with other animate and, in the Western sense, 'inanimate' beings, a relationship based on a shared 'essence' of life...[This involved] spiritual relationships to the universe, to the landscape and to stones, rocks, insects and other things, seen and unseen (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999: 74).

Conversely, Christian missionaries advocated the presence of one supreme God; this God was transcendental and held dominion over nature. These concepts were fundamentally different to those believed previously and represented further change to traditional rituals. Having firmly established this one transcendental God, missionaries successfully converted large pockets of the country, primarily targeting chiefs due to their prominent position and influence. Though their activities were not always embraced⁸⁶, and sometimes resisted (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), Christianity from early on, as Douglas (2002) has said, became "...an indigenised daily spiritual experience and a powerful ritual practice" (2002, 11 see also above 5.2).

⁸⁶ The contribution of the auditor-general John Bates Thurston should also be noted here (Lawson, 1997).

⁸⁷ A number of Chiefs, including Ratu Seru Cakobau, Fiji's *Tui Viti*, or King at the time of cession, were not initially taken by Christianity. Though, this also had to do with the internal Chiefly politics of pre-cession Fiji (Ravuvu, 1991).

The two main Christian denominations introduced into Fiji in the 1800s were Methodism and Catholicism. However, it was the Methodists who were first to take root in the country during the 1830s and soon became numerically superior to Catholicism within the indigenous community. This largely accounts for the political power and influence Methodist converts, particularly chiefs, were able to yield. In fact, because it was the first to establish itself in the country, Methodism became regarded as the *lotu ni noda qase* or the 'church of our ancestors'. Ratuva (2002) highlights what this translated to arguing that this association gave Methodism "...a strong sense of historical connection with indigenous culture, moral values and political discourse" (2002, 19). Catholicism was very much the 'second' denomination in the pre-cession era through to the period of colonial administration. Nevertheless, Catholicism was incorporated into Fijian traditions and symbolism including its worship practices and doctrines (Ratuva, 2002).

There was another source of mass religious faith in Fiji, the origins of which were the indentured labour system. With the fruition of Gordon's immigration initiatives came a multi-denominational presence in the country of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Again, as in the case of Methodism and Catholicism for the indigenous population, these faiths to a large extent defined the cultural and customary practices of the newly arrived Indians. As a final comment on religion in Fiji, there was not only diversity in terms of faith among the Indian population but also regarding place of origin, caste, status and occupation (Lal, 1983; 1998).

One contemporary manifestation of the twin legacies of 'ethnic-separateness' is the ongoing manipulation by Indigenous Fijian Nationalists of Christian discourse. As noted in 5.2, this was reflected in calls for constitutional ratification for Fiji to become a Christian State (Douglas, 2002). Similar calls were expressed after the 1987 coup. As a strategy to enforce its demands for Christianity to become the state religion, Methodists organised a roadblock that surrounded Suva city. A Sunday was chosen to signify their angst at what they perceived as an abuse of their Sabbath by 'heathen races', referring to Indo-Fijians (Ratuva, 2002). In another outward display of parochial Fijian ethno nationalism following the coups of 1987, several Hindu temples were destroyed by young Methodists in Lautoka city. Many of those charged testified that what they did was in fulfilment of 'God's will' (Ratuva, 2002). The mere existence and open advocacy of these fundamentalist views among Fiji's political leadership has also led to the proliferation of such views within the church. For example, addressing a crowd at the parliamentary complex during the 2000 hostage crisis, a well-known evangelical church leader declared George Speight a "...Fijian biblical Joshua following in the wake of the Fijian Moses (General Sitiveni Rabuka), who staged the 1987 military coup to 'liberate' the Fijians (biblical Israelites) from their 'oppressors'" (Ratuva, 2002: 15).

Comparable views have also infiltrated the Fijian military. A month after the first coup in 1987 a Fijian newspaper⁸⁸ military advertisement declared a call to war in

⁸⁸ *Nai Lalakai*.

the spirit of God. The following excerpt from the same advertisement captures the core characteristic of Indigenous Fijian ethno nationalism:

Are we Fijians prepared to be ruled by an unchiefly and unchristian system? The Army is trying to protect the chiefs and their people...We are relying on God to be Lord of this Land. We should not worship other gods. Nor should we worship wealth, moon and sun, or the intellectuals. Only Jehovah should be Fiji's God...If leaders of the land are non-Christian, the Fijian race will be wiped out (*Nai Lalakai*, 1987 in Ratuva, 2002: 21).

Interestingly, while the military elite condemn various groups in this proclamation, their negative reference to 'moon and sun' is at odds with pre-Christian indigenous religions which viewed moon and sun as part of the universe, landscape, stones, rocks and insects as sharing the essence of life (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). The advertisement could not be any clearer. As Indigenous Fijians are predominantly Christian and Indo-Fijians are largely either of Hindu or Muslim faith, the assertion of Christianity expressed above is simply another way of asserting indigenous Fijian domination. In other words, ethnic difference in Fiji largely parallels religious affiliation (Ratuva, 2002).

Another contemporary manifestation of Fiji's colonial heritage is the contention over the under-representation of indigenous Fijians in commerce. One expression of this apparent inequity is the Fiji government's 'Blueprint for the Advancement of

Indigenous Fijians' (Government of Fiji, 2002; Ravuvu, 1991). Outlined within this document is an assistance package aimed to facilitate economic affirmative action as it is felt that the indigenous community are economically disadvantaged. Contradicting the Government of Fiji's assertion, various poverty reports have found that Indo-Fijians on the whole are at least as disadvantaged as Indigenous Fijians, if not more so, particularly Indo-Fijian's living in rural areas (McWilliams, 2002; UNDP, 1997) and suffering as a result of lease expiries (see below). The concern here is that government affirmative action is expressed on the basis of ethnicity and not advocated on the basis of need (Reddy and Prasad, 2002).

One reason for the slow emergence of an Indigenous Fijian business class, according to Robertson and Sutherland (2001), is that the colonial system of Fijian administration confined most Fijians to the subsistence economy which did not allow them to fully engage in the capitalist economy. The Fijian Administration, again a creation of Sir Arthur Gordon, limited their roles as small-time buyers, sellers, and landlords. But even as landlords, Indigenous Fijian's roles were usurped by institutions like the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) (Robertson and Sutherland, 2001). Despite government concerns, Indigenous Fijians do succeed in business in Fiji, which challenges the stereotype that they lack business acumen.

Property rights and the renewal of land leases has emerged as a significant concern in Fiji, particularly given the country's considerable reliance on the sugar

and tourism industries (Prasad and Kumar, 2000; Prasad, 1997). As Kurer (2001, 299) states, “[l]and tenure policy is arguably the most contentious issue in Fiji”. Eighty seven percent of land in Fiji is communally owned by Indigenous Fijians (Prasad and Reddy, 2002), while 63 % is leased (Ward, 1995). The vast majority of these leases are held by Indo-Fijian cane farmers who are responsible for approximately 88 % of cane production (Prasad and Kumar, 2000). The emerging problem is that the 30 year leases established around Independence are not being renewed by the managing agent for communally owned land, the NLTB. This decision has been apparently pursued to increase the participation of Indigenous Fijians in sugar cane production as a broader goal of economic affirmative action. The ethnic dimension of agricultural production is clearly evident. Indeed, The NLTB, which was established by the colonial administration in the 1940s, is held as a symbolic Indigenous Fijian institution, similar to the Great Council of Chiefs which, likewise, acts as a guardian of indigenous interests. The non-renewal of leases to Indo-Fijians is viewed as an expression of indigenous Fijian empowerment.

By tracing Fiji’s colonial continuities we can see just how the British administration, through its various policies, created a country where culture; understood as issues of identity, and development; whether colonial or post-independent, are intimately bound. It also, importantly, reveals a commonality between Fiji’s main social groups, and hence, represents potential for dialogue based on a shared

predicament (see also Chapter Eight). According to Chakrabarty (2000 cited in Ghosh, 2004: 128):

If...both Fijian and Indian cultures, knowledges, life-worlds and life-practices were invaded and colonised; if they both experienced what Gayatri Spivak called 'epistemic violence', then this shared predicament of the Indian indentured immigrant and the Indigenous Fijian landowner should create the possibility of a dialogue between the two. This conversation is not based only on 'shared histories' (as may be claimed between the settler and native) but on the shared predicament of having been colonised (both politically and intellectually) (2000 cited in Ghosh, 2004: 128).

But as I highlight in the following section, the potential for dialogue based on shared predicament or on any other basis, seems to be constantly undermined in Fiji as dominant discourses are persistently appropriation by powerful individuals and groups in the country.

5.5 CO-OPTING 'INDIGENOUSNESS' AND 'CHRISTIANITY'

Transformation describes the ways in which colonized societies have taken dominant discourses, transformed them and used them in the service of their own empowerment (Ashcroft, 2001: 1).

In 4.3 I referred to the existence of two opposing approaches within development discourse: top-down and bottom-up development and described how the former was underpinned by a superior/inferior or active/passive binary. I also suggested that this contradiction represented a fracture or gap within development discourse through which the conditions of possibility of resistance could emerge. In this section I consider the way certain high-profile indigenous individuals and groups within Fiji have, indeed, transformed dominant discourses and used them for their own empowerment. The conditions of possibility in this case have come via the recognition of indigenous rights movements and their international legitimacy as part of United Nations conventions. The “new twist” to indigenous rights discourse, though, as Robertson and Sutherland (2001, 108) have observed in the case of Fiji, is that this transformation discriminates against others; namely Indo-Fijians. Added to this is the use or mis-use, by these same individuals and groups, of Christianity to mark themselves further as the only legitimate ‘owners’ and inhabitants of Fiji (Douglas, 2000). This has also manifest itself in NGOs such as Soqosoqo Vakamarama⁸⁹.

Whereas in conventional development models scientific knowledge is seen as universally applicable (Chapter 2; Escobar, 1995; Hobart, 1993) and indigenous cultures, as I suggested earlier, are seen as ‘obstacles’ to development, indigenous rights discourse views local knowledges as central to development

⁸⁹ Women’s rights activist and lawyer Imrana Jalal (2002) suggests race-based women’s NGOs such as Soqosoqo Vakamaramas need to open their ranks and be more inclusive in order to foster multiracialism in Fiji. She also includes Stri Sewa Sabhas, another women’s NGO in her critique.

processes⁹⁰ (Agrawal, 1995). In the last decade or so, these views have found their way into powerful international development institutions. This new emphasis was evident in the World Bank publication, 'Indigenous knowledge for development: a framework for action' (1998). It argued that global knowledge needs to "...learn about indigenous knowledge (IK)...paying particular attention to the knowledge base of the poor" (1998, i). Similarly, in terms of large institutional recognition, this was acknowledged through the United Nation's declaration that 1995 to 2004 be the Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. While the Pacific was initially exposed to indigenous rights movements in the 1970s and 1980s (Ghosh, 2004), 1996 marked one of the first formal introductions of this proclamation into the region and came in the form of the inaugural Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific region Workshop held in Fiji. Here the Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was discussed and a Pacific position developed (UNDP, 1996). The then Prime Minister of Fiji, Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka, in his keynote speech to the workshop, eagerly embraced the Draft declaration and added his own line of reasoning. For any definition of indigenous peoples, declared Rabuka (1996), two factors must be legally accepted:

⁹⁰ This point highlights the fine line between a 'culturalist position', as I outlined in Chapter One, and a position like the one I am advocating here which sees cultural issues as critical to development intervention but does not go as far as to say that there is no room or potential in the views of 'outsiders'.

...that we are the first settlers, first dwellers or proprietors of our land, [and] second, we are a collective group who were imposed upon by uninvited external forces who disrupted the normal march of our history (1996, 8)

As expected, given the nature of the workshop, the keynote speech was filled with references to self-determination, identity and the necessity to secure "...our sense of community in the Pacific" (Rabuka, 1996: 9). To reinforce and legitimise his position Rabuka drew on Articles 3 and 8 of the Draft Declaration which states:

Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (Article 3 Draft Declaration in Rabuka, 1996: 8).

Indigenous people have the collective and individual right to maintain and develop their distinct identities and characteristics, including the right to identify themselves as indigenous and to be recognised as such (Article 8 Draft Declaration in Rabuka, 1996: 9).

He continued by stating that there can be no compromise on these articles and that they are the essence of "...our whole struggle for recognition" (Rabuka, 1996: 8). Towards the end of the address Rabuka made an ambiguous reference to universal principles, contrasting these with treasured indigenous values. He also

curiously presents it as a challenge, stressing the importance of convincing the members of the United Nations to recognise and adopt ‘their’ heartfelt and inherited indigenous values when finalising the draft document:

That task we must grasp, difficult as it might be to convince others who prefer generalised positions, often elevated, not by our consent but by the force of the history of coercion, and erroneously labelled, universal principles...In our [indigenous] cultures, there are differences amongst us and with others but these give us our distinctiveness, our character and our identity; they must remain for they make us what we are, they enrich us and they give us self-confidence and security (Rabuka, 1996: 9).

The keynote speech is important for a number of reasons. First, Rabuka sets up a dichotomy between the sanctity of indigenous rights and the “foreign disruption” (Rabuka, 1996: 8) of imposed universal principles. Though declaring that Article 3 (above) should not constitute a threat to anyone, stating that ‘we’ need to accept other races, religions and cultures, he cloaks the passage in the language of occupation, struggle and loss. The following excerpt is particularly revealing in terms of this:

I recognise that in many parts of the world, including the Pacific, the course of history has now inexorably determined that we must share our heritage with others. In fact, part of our heritage, often taken away from us against

our will, is no longer ours, it belongs to others. That cannot be entirely altered, redress is no longer a practical proposition (Rabuka, 1996: 9).

There is also a sense, and this is suggested through his 'challenge' (to the United Nations members), that the dominant universal principles he is referring to are those of human rights principles. Rabuka (1996) states that, "[t]o discard [our] treasured, reasonable and acceptable values, or to subjugate them to what dominant groups label universal does not make for consent..." (1996, 9). And further, our indigenous rights "...cannot be sacrificed for uniformity, especially for a uniformity that is imposed and brings us material and spiritual loss and results in discontent" (1996, 9).

Second, in terms of providing the context of the actions in 2000 of George Speight and his supporters and ongoing pronouncements by the current Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, the workshop established indigenous rights discourse as an internationally legitimate and timely undertaking in the region. Rabuka's speech, in turn, signalled a poignant introduction of indigenous rights into the political realm setting a disturbing precedent for the future. Indeed, the themes were consistent with Speight's call to action in May of 2000 vis-à-vis indigenous claims, occupation, struggle and loss (see Chapter One). Similarly too, the ambiguity with which

Rabuka spoke regarding indigenous rights were mimicked in Speight's claims that the 1997 Fijian Constitution had not protected Indigenous Fijians⁹¹.

While the conditions of possibility for the emergence of indigenous rights discourse were rooted in post-WW2 institutions such as the United Nations and World Bank, the predominance of Christian discourse evolved from early 19th century social intercourse with missionaries and other colonial ventures (see 5.4 above). Though, like indigenous rights discourse, Christian discourse has offered Melanesians membership in global moral communities (Douglas, 2002), rather dubiously, and again in a similar way to indigenous rights discourse, this global membership has emboldened those in positions of power to claim certain 'rights'. In this case it is a divine right as the following declaration by the Prime Minister illustrates:

The events of May 2000 happened because of God's plan...I believe God wanted to terminate that [Indian-led Labour] government (Qarase, 2000: 1).

Significantly, the ascendancy of both discourses rely on appeals to the past and authenticity. For indigenous rights discourse, time honoured 'traditions' are the key reference point. For Christian discourse, it is the continuation of ancestral principles of divine reverence. Two points can be made here. First, the authenticity that advocates of these discourses invoke are contemporary re-creations of the

⁹¹ The 1997 Constitution redressed many of the offensive stipulations found in the 1990 constitution. Particularly in terms of discrimination against Indo-Fijians. Importantly though, the 1997

past (5.4, see also Keesing, 1989; Douglas, 2002). Second, and importantly for the purposes of this section, the appropriation of these dominant discourses have problematised consensual notions of community empowerment which hardened supporters promote. It is the 'subjects' of the discourse, in this case the powerful 'colonised', who have co-opted indigenous and Christian discourses and reversed the active/passive binary. Troublingly, this mimicks 'the colonisers' and falls into the same essentialist trap, as now, other groups, most notably Indo-Fijians, are left disempowered and marginalised. The presence in Fiji of a highly parochial Indigenised Christianity has largely stifled attempts to breakdown definitional rigidities and has thus far stifled dialogue on the basis of other collective principles such as shared predicament (Chakrabarty, 2000 cited in Ghosh, 2004).

5.6 CONCLUSION: POSTCOLONIALISM AND FIJI

The predicament of Fiji is crucial for postcolonial studies because it foregrounds one of the paradoxes of the post-cold war era and of failed Third Worldism (Ghosh, 2004: 127).

Ghosh (2004) draws attention to the way Fiji, which experienced late decolonisation and little exposure or relevance to Third World solidarity movements, tapped into support of indigenous rights discourse in the 1970s and 1980s (see 5.4). At the same time, departing imperial powers were imposing the

model of the nation-state often overseen by international bodies like the United Nations. For Fiji, this involved establishing universal covenants and declarations which for the country's Constitutional Review Commission in 1996 meant embracing UN sanctions designed to empower people in the Third World. Ghosh (2004) states, however, that such measures "...were not appropriate to a state where the indigenous people consisted of half the population, controlled the majority of the land and were the politically dominant group" (2004, 127). To emphasise her point, Ghosh (2004) draws on Kaplan and Kelly's (2001) poignant affirmation of this paradox:

Unambiguously, Fiji had to be a nation-state. But how the nation-state form, especially in its entitlements, was expected to fit Fiji's situation was utterly ambiguous (Kaplan and Kelly 2001 cited in Ghosh, 2004: 127).

While Fiji represents an antithesis to this aspect of postcolonial studies⁹², the country's colonial legacies similarly present a dilemma for the good governance agenda (see Henderson, 2003⁹³). In particular, an agenda that seeks to 'develop' without engaging cultural identities and recognising how these impact on aid relations in the region. This is despite AusAID acknowledging, at least in policy "[a] legacy of inappropriate colonial structures...in many Pacific countries" (AusAID, 2004: 4).

(Robertson and Sutherland, 2001).

⁹² Which advocates pro-Indigenous sentiments.

The overlapping and co-constitutive nature of religion, traditions, ethnicity and gender confound both the input/output and mechanistic 'principles' of neoliberalism and the neat assumptions which underpin the nation-state. Douglas (2002), for example, states that the aid industry continues to underrate the ideological importance of indigenised Christianity in nation making in Melanesia. This level of indifference toward identity issues was apparent in an interview with a donor manager responsible for programmes in Fiji. When questioned on George Speight's 'use' of indigenous rights as part of UN conventions to legitimate his cause, the manager commented that they 'hadn't thought about it'. Moreover, the manager had always considered UN conventions the final line of defence against cultural relativism among recalcitrant political leaders. Rather unconsciously, the manager felt that there would 'always be the UN conventions on race' that could 'dig us out' of any contentious issue vis-à-vis racialism. This was a troubling oversight given the manager's position, the extensive media coverage at the time and the historical regularity of this line of argument⁹⁴.

⁹³ Henderson (2003) talks extensively about the difficulties of 'imposing' democracy on Melanesian countries.

⁹⁴ Sitiveni Rabuka used similar arguments leading up to the 1987 coups and throughout the 1990s (For instance, during the inaugural Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific region Workshop held in Fiji in 1996 see above 5.2).

PART III

GEOGRAPHY, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT – THE

CASE OF FIJI'S AID INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

In Part III I employ postcolonial critique to contest the way academic discourse, like development discourse, in many ways perpetuates colonising relations and binaries. I also identify how postcolonialism contributes to thinking differently about ways of conceptualising research interventions and undertaking research in the 'Third World'. This particular venture invokes several key debates currently being waged in geography and in the field of development more broadly. My conclusion is that postcolonial critique, and more specifically, postcolonial geography, is well placed to respond to each of these conversations. What comes out clearly in Part III is that 'doing development differently', and by this I make no distinction between development or academic interventions, requires inventive forms of praxis that reject definitional rigidities and theoretical dogmas. Indeed, by enabling new critiques, knowledges, methodologies, forms of teaching, strategies of dissent or modes of conceptualisation and collectivity, postcolonialism's foray into the field of development marks a new sense of politics and hope.

CHAPTER 6

Postcolonial Methodologies

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Part II introduced the pertinence of postcolonial critique as a way of better understanding and explaining development's increasingly complex processes, particularly in the South Pacific. I challenged the way development discourse establishes and reproduces difference in the aid industry by emphasising some of the strategies and transformed identities that follow collective action, thus giving an example of societies trying to control their own futures. I also brought to the fore cultural identities revealing them as both dynamic and fundamental to understanding everyday life, and therefore 'development', in the region. This analysis involved contesting binary thinking, exposing the constructed nature of difference and emphasising hybrid, mutually constituted identities.

In Chapter Six I undertake this same method to 'unpack' academic discourse, then reinterpret research relations drawing on postcolonial methodologies. The chapter begins by confronting two key questions facing the discipline of geography. The first involves the urgent call to decolonise the discipline. In an increasingly globalised world where the two emerging economic super powers; India and China, along with the rest of the 'developing world', remain marginal concerns to the discipline, geography must step out of its comfortable Anglo-American surroundings. That is, it must acknowledge the 'geo' in geography, as Potter (2002)

aptly put it. This will involve decentring a number of the Anglo-American dominated sub-disciplines such as economic, urban and social geography. But more importantly, this entails decolonising development geography, which despite its geographical focus and practice of looking beyond 'comfortable surroundings', in many ways continues to maintain difference in its teachings, research and the production of disciplinary texts. The second key question (in 6.2) relates to concerns over the perceived irrelevance of development geography as a 'player' in intellectual and policy debates, both within the broad field of development (Bebbington, 2003) and within the discipline of geography itself (Potter, 2002). Disappointingly, this is despite current levels of global inequality and increasingly evident links between uneven development and world peace and stability (Potter, 2002).

In 6.3 I consider the colonising concepts and practices that have characterised research interventions in the South Pacific. Drawing on examples from Fiji and my own research, I highlight the extractive way that research has been conducted in the past and consider the institutional locations (such as universities) where colonising hierarchies and binaries originate. In the spirit of postcolonialism I then subject my own research to postcolonial critique and expose certain instances of colonial reproduction. In 6.4 I sketch out ways in which postcolonial geographers are confronting the key issues of decolonisation and apparent irrelevance. Drawing on Staeheli and Mitchell (2005) and Raghuram and Madge (2006) I posit that for (development) geography to maintain relevance it must, as a core aim, respond to

the dire social circumstances that face the 'Third World', and as part of that commit to the very specific issues raised by those who are 'researched'. As Raghuram and Madge (2006) assert, this will demand engaging in constructive dialogue that takes into account the conceptual landscape of those with whom we engage. In this sense I consider my attempts to ensure relevance through my methodology and epistemological choices.

6.2 DECOLONISING (DEVELOPMENT) GEOGRAPHY?

Decolonising geography is a multi-faceted task, reflecting the need to reassess the history of geography; to challenge ethnocentric tendencies in geography today; to reveal the geographical underpinnings of colonial power and knowledge; to resist these geographies of colonialism and colonial knowledge; and to write postcolonial geographies that focus on people and places that have been marginalised in colonial and neocolonial representations of the world (Blunt and Wills, 2000: 168).

The themes and polemics introduced so far in this thesis speak to the importance of discourse, the effects of binary thinking and subsequent reproduction of difference, and to the multiplicity of identities. In this section I add that these themes are also implicated in the production and deployment of academic knowledge. Significantly, they invoke one of the more contentious and urgent issues facing geography—the question of decolonising the discipline. It is

contentious because it has in its sights epistemological and methodological orthodoxies held dear to geography's bastions—the subdisciplines of economic, urban and social geography (Driver, 1992: esp. page 26; see further below). It is urgent in that geography's 'business-as-usual' can perpetuate colonising relations and binaries. As I discuss later in the chapter, one of the consequences of the latter is to risk academic irrelevance in an increasingly globalised world.

Let us start with the obvious question. What is it that makes geography and its various sub-discipline's colonising? While the task of explicating the vast histories and effects of a discipline as broad and diverse as geography is beyond the ambits of this study (see Crush, 1994; Driver, 1992; Godlewska and Smith, 1994; Gregory, 1994; Hudson, 1977; Jacobs, 1996), a short synopsis outlining some of the origins, concepts and practices of geography is a way of highlighting certain continuities. Smith and Godlewska (1994) offer a suitable preamble on the topic of origins:

Geography's 'colonial encounter' is only beginning to be re-evaluated critically, but it is already clear that the very formation and institutionalisation of the discipline was intricately bound with imperialism (Smith and Godlewska, 1994: 4).

Drawing on Joseph Conrad's (1926 cited in Driver, 1992) original reflections on his travels to Africa, Driver (1992) highlights Conrad's focus on exploration to articulate the importance of the technical and cultural dimensions of geography. Notable

among these were navigation and cartography, supported by the rhetoric and iconography of discovery. Indeed, as Driver (1992) asserts, "...armies of cartographers, navigators, surveyors, and explorers, whose practical labours in Europe and at the imperial frontier were vital to the projects of colonialism" (1992: 29). This complicity of geography and empire (in the English speaking world) was first comprehensively taken up by Hudson (1977), who describes the connections between the birth of modern geography and the emergence of capitalist imperialism in the late 19th century. Hudson (1977) refers to the ways in which geography served the interests of imperialism "...in its various aspects including territorial acquisition, economic exploitation, militarism and the practices of class and race domination" (1977, 12). European geographers proclaimed the perceived needs of empire and frequently associated their discipline as a necessary aid to statecraft and one of worldly significance (Driver, 1992).

The 'armies' of the 19th century imperial frontier have been replaced. Instead of cartographers, navigators, surveyors, and explorers, there are now development consultants, aid works and various other 'experts' and academics representing a myriad of institutions, NGOs and community groups (see Chapter Two and Chapter Three). While I would not argue that these more recent interventions mirror precisely those of the past or repeat the considerable horrors of imperialist expansion, I would suggest that certain concepts and practices, certainly within academia and geography, persist⁹⁵. Said's (1993) explanation of the cultural effect

⁹⁵ Including, of course, my own intervention! (see below).

and basis of colonialism tap into the concepts and practices I am referring to here. For Said (1993), colonialism was not only about soldiers and cannons “...but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings” (Said, 1993: 7). This, of course, builds on his earlier work (1978; see Chapter One) where he outlined how the ‘imaginative geographies’ produced by the West about the East, aimed to *construct* a certain ‘reality’. This reality was structured so to “...promote the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”) (Said, 1978: 43). In this conceptualisation, ‘imaginative geographies’ of both West and East were produced by orientalist discourses, suggesting “...the relational constitution of identity and a spatial politics of difference” (Blunt and Wills, 2000: 184).

The contemporary prevalence in academia and geography of such dichotomies, in this case West and the Rest, and their ongoing legacies, are well exposed through the work of Chakrabarty (2000) and Robinson (2003) (see also Ferguson, 2006 in relation to the same debilitating dichotomies in the African context). As I mentioned in the Chapter One, Chakrabarty’s (2000) compelling critique highlights the asymmetrical relations and ignorance that underpin western scholarship. This unevenness is well illustrated in the following excerpt:

“They” produce their work in relative ignorance of non-Western histories, and this does not seem to affect the quality of their work. This is a gesture, however, that “we” cannot return. We cannot even afford an equality of

symmetry of ignorance at this level without taking the risk of appearing “old fashioned” or “outdated” (Chakrabarty, 2000: 28).

Drawing on Chakrabarty, Robinson (2003) emphasises how this asymmetrical ignorance is particularly poignant for geography as a discipline “...grounded in the exploration and understanding of different places and cultures” (2003, 275). Robinson (2003) argues that contemporary geographical scholarship has retreated into a universalist and parochial theoreticism. Assumed universal claims in these works reveal an ignorance of a range of different social contexts. Postcolonial sensibilities, according to Robinson (2003), involve provincialising such universalist knowledges, and while acknowledging one’s locatedness is a beginning, it does not actually start this provincialising process. So for Robinson (2003), then, statements by Amin and Thrift (2002), such as ‘of course we write this with Northern cities in mind’, fail to disturb the ethnocentrism of urban theory (Amin and Thrift, 2002 in Robinson 2003: 277). Likewise, Donald’s (1999) analysis of the modern urban city acknowledges his account to be located, then accepts its Eurocentrism. The concern for Robinson (2003) is that acknowledging location does little to rethink this ‘new urbanism’. Indeed, there is a sense the recognition of locatedness licenses an unproblematic reproduction of ethnocentrism.

A number of works in development geography, particularly introductory texts, commit the same errors in terms of privileging Western knowledges and perpetuating colonising binaries and hierarchical relations (Hodder, 2000;

Glassman and Samatar, 1997; see also Yapa, 2002; Myers, 2001; Murphy, 2006). Myers (2001) analysis of introductory human geography textbooks on Africa, for instance, highlight the troubling generalizations and simplifications that characterise these introductory works. While not writing off these texts completely⁹⁶, Myers (2001) notes the way these authors portray Africa as a place of decline and failure. For instance, the continent is represented as:

...a bastion of authoritarianism and instability, the epicenter of the world's human crises: AIDS, overpopulations, desertification, refugees, overurbanisation, the failures of the Green Revolution, global malnutrition, and on and on (2001, 529).

Similarly, Murphy (2006) stresses the heuristic frame for economic geography texts and courses in which case an emphasis is placed on the obstacles and challenges to developmentalism in the 'Global South'. This focus on negative representations are carried through in other texts via imagery. For example, the disturbing cover image on Rupert Hodder's (2000) introductory book to development geography—referred to by him as 'homeless mother and child'—reinforces the visions of a beleaguered, powerless and 'objectified Other'. Myers (2001) too identifies geography texts which portray the imagery of the mother-and-child representation of victimhood (Bergman, 1995; Fellman *et al*, 1999; Knox and Marston, 2001;

⁹⁶ Myers (2001), in fact, applauds aspects of these texts in terms of their understanding of the diverse processes involved. Particularly, given that the broad area of analysis, in most cases, is not their subject of speciality.

Norton, 1998; Rubenstein, 1999). He argues that such representation reinforce deeply entrenched visions by characterising them as standing for the plight of the continent as a whole, and relatedly, locating African agency as futile or nonexistent (Myers, 2001).

There are other concerns too regarding development geography texts. Specifically, they involve peculiar silences in terms of the critical influence of postmodernism and postcolonialism in the past decade and a half. For example, while Hodder (2000) makes the important point that clear-cut distinctions between the 'developed' and 'developing' countries should not be assumed, he fails to extend this critical idea with reference to, as he says, "the most challenging work on development today" (Hodder, 2000:17); namely, accounts of postmodernism and postcolonialism. Despite its 'challenging nature', the latter is only given three-quarters of a page. Another example is that of Glassman and Samatar's (1997) review of development geography and the state which pays no attention at all to the 're-readings' provided by postcolonialism or postmodernism, preferring a state-centric synopsis of the sub-discipline. Such brief (or non-existent) reference to postmodernism and postcolonialism reveals a distinct reluctance to privilege anything other than a narrow economic state-centrism.

Continuing in this vein, furthermore, Hodder's (2000) explanations and examples developed through his description of cultural issues, population and development, rural-urban development, the role of the state etc., are each positioned relative to a

transcendental and unproblematised global economy. It is the unquestioned and normative tone that is of importance here. In fact, apart from the orthodoxy of Hodder (2000) and Glassman and Samatar's (1997) work, there is also a familiar silence on questions of methodology, fieldwork and research practice. Indeed, the spectre of the 'detached author', particularly in the case of Hodder (2000), is troubling vis-à-vis perpetuating colonising binaries and hierarchical relations⁹⁷.

6.3 COLONISING INTERVENTIONS? ACADEMIC CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES IN THE PACIFIC

But what about academia more broadly? I have talked about some attributes of academic discourse that perpetuate colonising relations in geography publications, but what about research and teaching? More particularly, what colonising concepts and practices persist in terms of academic interventions in the Pacific and Fiji? One question in my interview schedule during my first fieldtrip to Fiji was to ask participants their view of research and researchers. The thrust of the question was to get a sense of the general approach of individuals coming into the region to undertake research. The following two interviewee responses to this question highlight the extractive and colonising propensities that have characterised some research undertakings in Fiji. The third excerpt comes from a phone conversation where I was requesting an interview and reveals a serious, and as it turned out, understandable level of apathy:

⁹⁷ There are exceptions, of course, largely beginning in the early 2000s that take seriously

[One] negative case [was] when a lady from a [bilateral organisation] was involved with [us] and used the resources here. She now considers herself an 'expert' on Pacific women's issues and got a PhD out of all the information gained here. The thing was that she did not make it known that she was doing research and certainly did not tell anyone here. When at Rio + 5⁹⁸ she was presenting her paper as though it was all her information but...it was our information! (NGO Representative, Interview 1, 2002).

[P]eople apply from Europe and they just want to research [in Fiji]...[T]hey send an email so we say, well, we can make some time and then they ask us for suggested areas; what are the areas of need? So [we reply] maybe you [could] look at the impact of the political crisis (referring to the 2000 coup); the psychology and that kind of thing. And they say no, no, no we are not interested in that...we are interested in these [other] issues. So they try and look at what our needs are and then if it doesn't fit into line with what they want [they ignore it]...[I]t's a lot of time and effort [with]...no remuneration for our part...and [other] people benefit from that (NGO Representative, Interview 1, 2002).

Well, what can you do for me...I have researchers come in all the time and I hear nothing. I just spent three days of my time with a donor only to get

questions of methodology and fieldwork (see Power, 2003 for example).

⁹⁸ Rio + 5 was the second United Nations' Earth Summit conducted five years after the inaugural summit held in Brazil in 1992.

nothing back. I have contacted them but still nothing (NGO Representative, pers. comm., 2002).

In the first two interviewee responses we notice a familiar hierarchy in terms of North/South relations. Mirroring the extractive terms of the colonial project, the bilateral representative retained locally-generated knowledge for individual academic gain. The lack of transparency reinforces the uneven relationship, both on account of assuming that to take without acknowledgement was somehow acceptable or presumed. But also, to not suspect that public airing of these findings would be above reproach or not come under scrutiny, at the very least, conceals and undermines local expertise. Similarly, the second excerpt replicates this North/South relationship, though this time there is an added paternal overtone whereby 'Europe knows best' despite local needs and concerns.

The sentiment expressed in the phone conversation highlights the ultimate effects of poor research practice. While not knowing the details of the intervention, the representative's expectations were clearly not met, leading to an understandable level of indifference to the research process. The donor's absence effectively forfeited the possibility of subsequent research undertakings with the NGO; at least in the short term. This was certainly the situation in my case and as a prominent NGO in Fiji, the methodological scope of my research was limited as a result. As Stevens (cited in Howitt and Stevens, 2005) argues, colonising research reflects and embodies unequal power relations and associated discourses and

methodologies. Indeed, the examples above show how certain methodological practices undermine “...trust, and sabotages communication and collaborative exploration (Stevens cited in Howitt and Stevens, 2005: 34).

Broadening the critique further, the institutional locations where these colonising binaries and hierarchical relations originate, and are embedded, also need to be thoroughly decentred for any meaningful academic decolonisation (Abbott, 2006; Howitt and Stevens, 2005; Raghuram and Madge, 2006). Such a focus brings into view teaching development geographies⁹⁹, the process of developing research topics (see further ‘relevance’ debate below 6.4), and the ethics procedures involved when undertaking research with ‘human participants’. Research ethics and methodology have become the focus of renewed concern to geographers (Hay, 1998; Proctor, 1998; Smith, 2001; Winchester, 1996), particularly in cross-cultural setting (Hodge and Lester, 2006; Howitt *et al*, 1990; Howitt and Jackson, 1998; Perkins, 1992; Raghuram and Madge, 2006; Rugendyke, 2004; Scheyvens and Leslie, 2000; Sidaway, 1992; Teariki, 1992; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Walsh, 1992). Despite this new awareness, one area of focus that has received less attention is that of the ethics process itself.

⁹⁹ I have very limited experience in teaching development geographies or teaching development more generally. As a result, I concentrate here on the research process.

While the practice of obtaining ethics clearance prior to undertaking research is now required in most universities¹⁰⁰, variations do exist between countries and universities in the way research projects are scrutinised by research bodies (Mercer, pers. comm., 2004). For example, in Australia differences can be determined by the institutional location of geography and the individual make up of Human Research Ethics Committees¹⁰¹ (HRECs) (Hodge and Lester, 2006; Rugendyke, 2004; Winchester, 1996). According to Rugendyke (2004), HRECs play a role in shaping geographical research. For instance, ethical practice can impose conditions on research in terms of guiding methodologies or channelling research themes in an increasingly litigious society. Additionally, Rugendyke (2004) highlights that the notions of ethical practice that underpin HRECs are often incongruent with many of those we research. These types of concerns are only now being more broadly acknowledged in the context of geography (Raghuram and Madge, 2006)¹⁰² (see also 6.2), and yet ethics processes have a significant bearing, as Rugendyke (2004) suggests, on the form that research takes. I too would add, that these academic formalities and the notions that underpin them can perpetuate colonising binaries and hierarchies.

One academic formality is that of informed consent. While gaining consent is an ethical requirement, this Western idea is based on the concept of individual rights. Rugendyke (2004) suggests how, in her work with indigenous minority groups in

¹⁰⁰ The establishment of ethics procedures has been a key development in ensuring more equitable research relations (see below).

¹⁰¹ Meaning, their methodological and epistemological background.

Vietnam, the concept of individual consent was utterly inappropriate and subservient to communal interest. In Rugendyke's (2004) case, interviews inevitably became communal conversations, including extended family. In this situation consent was granted through accepting her group presence. While this particular concern was less acute when gaining consent in my Fiji-based fieldwork¹⁰³, the acceptance aspect was not dissimilar.

Prior to undertaking research in the country, I was advised by an experienced expatriate researcher on the casual nature of gaining consent in the country. I was told that it was a case of a phone call at most and the idea of providing detailed preparatory material and consent forms was unnecessary. The mandatory process of providing an explanation of research aims, objectives and questions, was perhaps expected by some but most found the process and required documentation either superfluous or arduous. At worse, interviewees found the material somewhat esoteric¹⁰⁴. This did not bode well for the consultative and reciprocal objectives of the research. Only a very small percentage of the 25 initial interviewees completed the necessary ethics procedures and consent forms prior to the May 2002 fieldtrip, leaving me in a precarious position in terms of adhering to university guidelines. Fortunately, the advice I had received proved correct. Once I had talked to and met potential interviewees and introduced myself and

¹⁰² Raghuram and Madge (2006, 274) highlight a similar point in the context of the British Academy.

¹⁰³ I was primarily undertaking interviews with representatives of NGOs and others involved in the aid industry who were generally more in tune with academic procedures. Certainly more so than individuals, say, who have rural occupations and live in village setting (vis-à-vis indigenous minority groups in Vietnam).

explained the ideas behind my research, including the methodology (see below 6.3), consent followed. In other words, it was my physical presence and casual manner¹⁰⁵, not the sequential formalities of the ethics process, that led to consenting participants. What was deemed ‘appropriate’ process and ‘ethical’ practice by a far-off HREC was incompatible with the impromptu nature of research ‘in the moment’ in Fiji (see further Howitt and Stevens, 2005 esp. 38-39).

Rugendyke (2004) refers to something similar when identifying the serendipitous nature of social science research. It is the “...unexpected encounter, the casual conversation, the anecdotes...” (Rugendyke, 2004: 4)—those interactions that cannot possibly be subjected to formal approval—that can be more illuminating than intended research methods. While my experience of participant aversion to academic rigmarole is not unique to Fiji or even cross-cultural research, it is the assumptions that underpin the ethics process and the postcolonial setting¹⁰⁶ that deem it problematic.

I identified above Said’s (1993) reminder that colonialism was not just about physical incursions but involved ideas, forms, images and imaginings. In this sense, the assumption that any university holds both the knowledge and authority to determine the appropriateness and ‘ethics’ of a research proposal reproduces

¹⁰⁴ These observations came out over the period of both interviews (i.e., in May 2002 and October 2002) and numerous casual discussions.

¹⁰⁵ And informal tone in terms of use of language.

¹⁰⁶ Here I use ‘postcolonial’ as a temporal marker to locate Fiji as imbricated in British colonial history.

the active/passive binary of the colonial moment and subsequent development interventions (see Part I and II). Once again, 'we', the knowing 'developed world', habitually knows best. This time we not only generate the research; its objectives, questions and methodologies, but the university defines the conditions of consent too. Irrespective of the intentions of HRECs and reason for their existence in the first place, one outcome in terms of what the process itself constitutes, is further ideological incursion. This partly explains much of the irritability the process causes many participants¹⁰⁷. But it also shows the ultimate value placed on written documentation and with it the prescriptive tome of informed consent.

Another methodological matter involving the rigidities of the ethics process and subsequent concern of academic formalities maintaining social difference involves ethical guidelines and interview questions. When seeking approval for the interview schedule at the University of Newcastle in 2000, only approved questions could be executed during an interview¹⁰⁸. Within the dictates of ethical guidelines, follow up queries or probing questions would constitute a variance from the schedule. Yet this rigidity belies the dialogical facets of the interview process, particularly when undertaking a series of interviews. In the case of my interview schedule, which at times involved up to three interviews a day, constant modification of interview questions was necessary and appropriate. This reflected both the immediate

¹⁰⁷ This 'eye rolling syndrome' is the cringe factor associated with the entire pre-interview ethics formalities and the prospect of wading through pages of information. What is considered such a formality in academia cannot be assumed to be so in other contexts.

¹⁰⁸ Since 2000, ethics procedures at the University of Newcastle have changed whereby some of processes involved have become less rigid and more fitting for research fieldwork.

responses in terms of content and the changing circumstances within which participants worked, particularly given the time lapse between when the questions were developed and passed through ethics and when the interviews took place. Conceptually too, the dialogical and conversational facets of the interviews meant constant re-evaluations of my assumptions during and following each exchange. Consequently, and despite ethical guidelines, questions were altered between interviews to better reflect the NGO scene and the fluid interview process (see Appendix Item 1). In their procedural guise, academic formalities, such as ethics processes, are a subtle yet additional hierarchical layering; particularly as they highlight and sometimes reinforce the difference between academia and the social realities of relations and ideas of communication that exist in Fiji's aid industry.

Let us now look a little closer at my research. I have talked about the cross-cultural inadequacies of geography, development geography, and concerns regarding ethics processes. But what colonial concepts and practices was my academic pursuit reproducing? Highlighting the importance of Gayatri Spivak's work for those involved in the field of development, Kapoor (2004) poses the question, "to what extent do our depictions and actions marginalise or silence these groups and mask our own complicities?" (2004,628). My immediate answer would be: perhaps, to a large extent! I concur with Spivak (1988, 1990) in arguing that Western intellectual production in many ways mirror Western imperialism (See also Robinson, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). My research is implicated in this reproduction. The retrieval

of 'data' from the 'South', not to encounter the latter on its own terms, but for 'First World' purposes, has a very familiar ring to it.

First, of course, are the 'good intentions' that underpinned my academic undertaking. Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 24) highlights historical continuities when stating how research brings with it a new wave of exploration, discovery, exploitation and appropriation. According to Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 24) "...acts and intentions are always justified as being for the 'good of mankind'". In line with one of the key thoughts of Western Enlightenment—progressivism—and despite apprehensions over what conventional research could actually achieve in cross-cultural settings (Hodge, 1999; Hodge and Lester, 2006), I ploughed ahead truly maintaining I could make things better. In other words, I shared an almost innate belief in my ability as some agent of progress. Additionally, one of the reasons Fiji was chosen was because English is widely spoken in the country and I do not speak Hindi or Fijian. Here I took advantage of Fiji's colonial legacy. So while I critique the effects of colonialism I am also riding on colonialism's back.

Moreover, from the outset the presumption was made that due to my 'scholarly endeavour' I was somehow authorised to undertake research and do so in an uninhibited way i.e., by gaining access to key informants at will (see Howitt and Stevens, 2005 esp., 43). Despite my altruistic intentions and sincerity, by wanting to help the Fijian and Indo-Fijian Other help themselves—whether by revealing discriminatory practices of individuals and NGOs or by exposing 'identities' as

socially constructed—I am essentially framing their difference in a way determined by me for my own benefit. This is particularly pertinent given the necessity of a PhD thesis to ‘contribute to the field’ in as scholarly and theoretically rigorous way as possible. Ultimately, Fiji provided the ‘resources’ that generate publications and subsequent ‘professional’ positions gained. This in turn creates and maintains economic differences between ‘them’ and ‘us’, between the ‘researched’ and the ‘researcher’ (Ferguson, 1998 see also Katz, 1994: 71-71; Stacy, 1988). The complicity of research, in terms of perpetuating colonial or imperial relations, is far-reaching. Though, and this is an important point for postcolonial geography, Spivak also maintains, while the subaltern is “irretrievably heterogeneous (and ultimately)...non-narrativisable” (1988, 284), this should not lead to a wholesale disavowal of research. In the following section I consider ways forward that embrace this heterogeneity by breaking down binaries such as the ‘field’/‘non-field’ dichotomy and attempting to make research relevant (see also Chapter Seven).

6.4 RELEVANCE, METHODOLOGY AND FIJI'S AID INDUSTRY

Our goal...is to democratise the debate about relevance in ways that bring voices and concerns not often aired in formal settings into dialogue with voices from the institutions (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005: 358).

...[P]ostcolonial method involves...[a] commitment to take up issues raised by those who are researched, a willingness to engage in constructive

dialogue that takes into account the conceptual landscape of those with whom we engage, as well as a desire to participate in emancipatory politics are all necessary if we are to get outside of what Sidaway (2000, 606) terms as Eurocentric “world-picturing” (Raghuram and Madge, 2006: 270-1).

In this section I pursue the question of relevance by thoroughly grounding the discussion in my methodology and the epistemological choices that underpin them. I explain the sequence with which I undertook my research, both in terms of identifying the topic of the research and its development as the research unfolded. Drawing on my experiences in Fiji, I argue for a more nuanced and socially contextualised mode and definition of relevance (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005); one that embraces local specificity. Developing some of the themes introduced in 6.2 and 6.3, I give an indication of what is involved in responding to those being ‘researched’ in Fiji, in particular, in the way proposed by Blunt and Will’s (2000). To them, the decolonising agenda involves challenging ethnocentric tendencies in geography and writing postcolonial geographies that focus on marginalised people and places.

In terms of geography, broadly, the ‘relevance debate’ has only resurfaced in any significant way in the late 1990s having, according to Beaumont *et al* (2005), “...disappeared from the mindset of geography in the 1980s”¹⁰⁹ (2005, 11; see

¹⁰⁹ While Beaumont *et al* (2005) perhaps overstate the point, there has been increased interest in the last decade and a half or so certainly since, or perhaps starting with Booth (1994) and Edwards (1989, 1994).

also Martin, 2001 and further below). Whether this renewed interest is a result of the coming to power of conservative governments in the UK, US, Australia and elsewhere with their monopolising of policy debates (Pacione, 1999; Massey, 2000) or whether it is just from a feeling of making little direct policy or theoretical impact (Bebbington, 2003), is difficult to tell. What is clear is that the issue of relevance in, and of, geography is once again back though this time our understanding of relevance is more differentiated.

From the formative emphasis in the early 1970s on social justice through humanist and radical Marxian theories (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005), what now constitutes 'relevance' has proliferated. For example, Staeheli and Mitchell (2005) distinguish between relevance as pertinence, as commitment, as application, as centrality and as teaching. Within these definitions Staeheli and Mitchell (2005) highlight the nuanced and socially contextualised aspects of relevance. The overriding questions they pose are; for whom is it relevant, whose relevance and whose geography? What makes research relevant, for Staeheli and Mitchell (2005), is shaped by particular social circumstances and often what is considered relevant emerges when research responds to, and is produced out of, diverse social pressures. A further consideration is the extent to which research can be conveyed to different constituencies as an indication of relevance. This might involve, for example, publishing and presenting research in places other than geography journals and on the academic conference circuit.

This heightened interest in relevance and responsibility to respond to social pressures seem at odds with the insular and narrowing specialisation that has tended to characterise recent themes in the Anglo-American dominated sub-disciplines. As I suggested in 6.2, Potter (2001, 2002) and Robinson (2003) argue that there continues to be an increased level of parochialism within the more established geography sub-disciplines which, according to Potter (2002, 213) “...not only seems very old-fashioned, but highly misplaced in the new world order”. That is, in an increasingly uneven and inequitable world. Developing several themes identified earlier in this chapter in terms of decolonising geography (6.2, 6.3), ‘relevant’ research, it is argued, will largely hinge on methodological considerations (and their epistemological underpinnings) which, most importantly, involve listening to those worse affected by these uneven and inequitable realities.

Thirty-years ago, and in many ways anticipating the emergence of postcolonial critique, Paul Rabinow (1977 cited in Power 2003, 233) maintained that research in the field is partly to be understood as the “comprehension of the self by the detour of the comprehension of the other” (1977, ix cited in Power 2003, 233). Rabinow’s observation acknowledges the blurring of boundaries that has characterized the conceptual underpinning of what now passes as postcolonial or decolonising research methods. Cindi Katz’ (1992, 1994) contribution too is still relevant here when she identifies the way traditional research undertakings require marking off ‘a field’—establishing an artificial boundary in space and time—separate from the ‘non-field’, the academy. According to Katz (1994), such compartmentalization also

encourages distinctions to be made between 'the research' and 'everyday life'; and between 'the researcher' and 'the research subject'. The concern here is that these artificial boundaries may limit the potentiality for conceptualisations and collaborations between or across borders. One of Katz' (1994) significant conclusions is that we are, in fact, "...always already in the field" (1994, 67).

What Rabinow (1977) and Katz (1992, 1994) do is centrally locate 'the self' in epistemological and methodological choices. This involves, among other things, close introspection to constantly review and be prepared to modify our ideas and practices, and not just in relation to academic undertakings. As Katz (1994) has said, this includes breaching artificial boundaries, for instance between 'the researcher' and 'the researched', thus enabling the possibilities that might ensue from co-constructed knowledge. Within this diffused and collaborative conceptualisation of academic work (see more below), the "Eurocentric 'world-picturing'" (Sidaway cited in Raghuram and Madge, 2006: 270-1) that underpins and reinforces traditional epistemologies and associated methodologies is not only displaced and deemed anachronistic but is clearly inappropriate. I want to pursue further this line of argument in light of Staeheli and Mitchell's (2005) socially contextualised concept of relevance.

If what makes research relevant is shaped by particular social circumstances and emerges when responding to diverse social pressures (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005), then the appearance of participatory research methods as a priority in

development intervention represents one such response. With the work of Chambers (1983) and others in the late 1970s and early 1980s, methodological questions were posed for the first time as the development canon entered its fourth tragic decade. In its various guises¹¹⁰, participatory research posed questions of the researcher while problematising conventional research models. However, though participatory methods have been taken up and incorporated into the policies of governments and global institutions, such as the World Bank, fundamental change in the way research is initially conceptualised has not taken place. Far from thoroughly re-aligning aims and outcomes to the aspirations of those being researched—which was the promise of participatory research methods—the powerful establishment i.e., right wing academic ‘think tanks’, ‘first world’ governments and the like, continued structural adjustment programmes into the 1980s and 1990s and continue to pursue the latter’s latest manifestation: good governance. In other words, participatory methods were only embraced to the extent that it facilitated neoliberal agendas.

Here is my point. The promise of institutionalising participatory methods has simply not been realised, thus making the emergence and timing of postcolonial methods; that is, methods that redefine research relations and take into account “...the conceptual landscapes of those with whom we engage...(Raghuram and Madge, 2006: 270-1)” that much more relevant. Concomitantly, the unrealised promise of

¹¹⁰ For example, Participatory Action Research (PAR), Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to name but a few.

participatory methods deem the persistence of traditional epistemologies and methodologies with their dichotomous theorisations inapt in the face of increased global inequality and chronic world poverty.

With this in mind, I want to now highlight several epistemological and methodological choices I made as I embarked on and compiled my PhD thesis. Firstly, why focus on NGOs? And why prioritise advocacy? As a student of the poststructural turn in the 1990s, my theoretical orientation cemented the kind of critical work I was to later pursue in development. Postcolonialism too became an obvious conceptual path given its poststructural lineage and the emergence of literary and cultural criticism into human geography and development studies at the time. For reasons flagged in Chapter One and highlighted above, I was troubled by the self-evident language and practices of development and simultaneously interested in the question of how might these discourses and their products be altered to better reflect the interests and lives of the majority in the so-called 'Third World'. Convinced of the material potential of postcolonialism (see below 6.4), and refusing to forgo the progressivist tenets of developmentalism, I sought ways in which development may be transformed from within¹¹¹.

Concerns with NGOs 'local level successes' in terms of leaving intact "...the systems and structures that determine power and resource allocations" (Nyamugasira in Mohan, 2001:166) are well documented (Blackburn and Holland,

1996; Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Hulme, 1994; Hulme and Edwards, 1997; Singh, 1994). But despite these obvious limitations it remains the case that NGOs, CBOs and other critically oriented civil society organisations involved in development aid continue to be key proponents of counter-discursive strategies (see Chapter Four). That is to say, these organisations, which are growing exponentially, are those most capable of changing the language and practices of development. They are the ones acting as watchdogs to expose unjust government policies and are prepared to critique bilateral organisations and international governments. Through their research they generate the data that reveals questionable corporate activities and lay bare poor ethical practices and potential environmental hazards. They are increasingly at the frontline providing key social services to those most in need. NGOs, and particularly CBOs, are also most likely to be in touch with regional specificities in terms of understanding the particularities of localised axes of difference based on gender, ethnicity, age and religion but also those relating to geographical location and clan relations¹¹².

These transformative qualities explain the choice of NGOs as the primary exponents of the study. They also give explanation to the focus on advocacy as these organisations are those most prominent at raising awareness and other lobbying activities which often challenge the functionings of government and corporate practices. This is certainly true of NGOs, CBOs and other critically

¹¹¹ This statement presupposes that change from within, that is, the potential to manipulate the development canon—its institutions, language and practices—is in fact possible.

oriented civil society organisation in the South Pacific. Reflecting a level of urgency among these organisations in the region at that time¹¹³, advocacy had been added to a set of core priorities determined by Pacific NGOs as representative of their concerns and aspirations (Development Practitioner, Interview 1: 2002). For these reasons, advocacy, or more specifically, the possibility of ‘scaling-up’¹¹⁴ concerns and aspirations into the policies and programmes of governments, bilateral and multilateral organisations, became the study’s main theme alongside a general critique of development discourse.

Continuing this question of epistemology in view of relevance, Ron Martin (2001) speaks of our ‘moral duty’ [as academics] to expand and deepen our knowledge and understanding to help improve social, economic and environmental conditions. Human geographers, according to Martin (2001, 190), “...have an obligation to apply our ideas in the pursuit of the betterment of society”. This is not to say that focusing on the ‘developed world’ does not involve such an agenda. But, and here again I invoke Staeheli and Mitchell’s (2005) argument on research responding to diverse social pressures, given current levels of global inequality and the increasingly evident links between uneven development and world peace and stability, our ‘moral duty’ to distant geographies (Potter, 2002) is surely important, if not crucial. Certainly, this notion of ‘duty’, accompanied with a sense of heightened

¹¹² The specificities related to clan relations may in fact, in certain places, override the other localised axes of difference.

¹¹³ Specifically, 2001 and 2002.

¹¹⁴ This term was widely used throughout the 1990s and essentially means ‘inform’ i.e., how can the activities of NGOs impact on other development institutions.

disparity between nations, emerged in the interviews in Fiji. So too the importance of conveying research findings to different constituencies as an indication of relevance.

[T]he world's richer nations have a duty as more and more people go into poverty. I mean the world is not getting better – it's getting worse. People from affluent nations have a duty to change it if they can...I mean it's all tied up in these sorts of things. So yes, the role of researchers is [to]...raise awareness and develop constituency at home...Like, for example, you see in some Scandinavian countries. In the Netherlands they give a lot of their GDP to aid¹¹⁵...[and] I think that has a lot to do with the fact that the population recognises it; they have a constituency [and] something in the national psyche that accepts giving aid (FSPI Representative, Interview 1, 2002).

Scientific research on the environment comes to nothing if it is not translated and understood by the community and in the villages (SPACHEE Representative, 2002).

If you can figure out ways of sharing [the research]...posting it [with] PIANGO¹¹⁶: whatever area and organisation the research is applicable to

¹¹⁵ When compared to other nations.

¹¹⁶ PIANGO is a Pacific regional umbrella NGO representing national focal points of action on social, political, economic and environmental issues.

[and to] somehow get discussions going...(Development Practitioner, Interview 1, 2002).

As these accounts suggest, relevance in the context of Fiji's aid industry involves maintaining a 'moral duty', recognising the importance of translation and embracing advocacy. Conceiving the discrepancy of decreasing levels of aid against increasing levels of poverty in moral terms highlights questions of ethics and methodology: both primary themes in postcolonial criticism. Similarly, emphasising key issues of translation and cross-cultural understanding, along with the importance of moving discussions outside the academy, bears out the importance of the postcolonial predisposition to embrace issues raised by those who are 'researched'.

A second methodological issue which implicated certain epistemological choices was a striking 'informant inspired' shift in the primary research theme. As I have said, my initial research aims focused on advocacy and the mechanisms existing within the Fiji government, inter-government organisations (PIFS) and donors (AusAID and UNDP) to include NGO's in policy formation and implementation. However, what emerged from the first series of interviews in Fiji was a number of critical considerations not previously foreseen. Appeals to 'traditions' (often expressed as indigenous empowerment), the central importance of religion and the effects of ongoing gender inequality and ethnic discrimination impacted heavily on development relations (see Chapter Five, esp. 5.3). These considerations

represented a more fundamental set of concerns than advocacy per se. As a result, the interview schedule for the second fieldtrip was completely reworked to take into account these issues of heightened relevance. Concern for informant perceptions initiated a critical dialogue where I found myself justifying my own intervention. The reversal of roles, temporary though it was, became an initial step to think through ways in which conventional assumptions regarding 'the researched', as merely a 'source' of information (to be later analysed by the 'knowing' researcher (England, 1994: 82)), could start to be broken down and rethought. Ultimately, this 'informant inspired' shift, enacted during the research process, presented an opportunity to explore priorities not assumed by the original line of questioning and cleared the way for different theoretical possibilities and knowledges.

Given the importance of conveying research findings to different constituencies and confronted with these critical considerations, not least ones that had two years earlier impacted on circumstances surrounding the coup by George Speight and his followers (May 2000), I compiled '*In your words*' (see appendix item 5). This collection, which is largely composed of anonymous direct quotes by NGO and development practitioners, was distributed to each of the informants including donors, government departments and others involved in the Pacific aid industry¹¹⁷. What is clear following the two fieldtrips is that NGOs, donors and the Fiji government are struggling with the same issues in the country but it appears that

there is limited discussion of these critical considerations among the groups involved. To this end, and given that donors, NGOs and government departments expressed the need for more information on ‘what other organisations were thinking’, *In your words* fulfilled a conduit role by airing these critical views. Subsequent conversations revealed that responses to the collection had been encouraging, indeed, *In your words* was considered an apt resource to ‘ground’ ongoing NGO collaborations (Gibson, pers comm., 2004).

Another aspect of my methodology was my introduction immediately prior to undertaking each interview¹¹⁸. One key consideration that underpinned this preamble was a concern to dismantle the formality surrounding interviews. This involved laying bare my intentions and disclosing my epistemological viewpoint. Effectively acting as introductory prompts, I outlined my predisposed feelings toward ‘development’. In particular, the way it has been modelled as a blueprint or predetermined path defined as progress. This also involved revealing my understanding of the way research has historically been an extractive process, and rather than perpetuate this practice, I aimed to feed information back to participants. If I was to expect interviewees to divulge information on the organisation, including their personal views, I felt it necessary to do the same¹¹⁹. This pledge of reciprocity was eventually fulfilled, initially as a one-on-one

¹¹⁷ This included Australian based organisations such as ACFID and a number of Canberra-based NGOs I interviewed prior to the first fieldtrip in 2002.

¹¹⁸ As opposed to the information sheet that outlined the study and which preceded the interview.

¹¹⁹ On one occasion, though, this approach may have prematurely ended my chances of a planned interview. Having revealed my being influenced by the critique of development, a donor

presentation, of sorts, prior to the second set of interviews (in September 2002), and more formally as *In your words* (Hodge, 2004). Even taking into account the inevitable differences in interviewee personalities, I aimed to simply be a part of an open and flowing conversation rather than the ‘instigator’ and ‘director’ and of discussion. This communicative approach suited the informal nature with which the majority of interviewees conducted themselves and evidently discussions were highly successful in encouraging open and often telling accounts. As I have highlighted above, many participants ended up unveiling a number of searing issues and highly personal stories that seemed to underpin other concerns in the NGO community.

In this section I have argued for a more nuanced and socially contextualised mode and definition of relevance that embraces local specificity by being prepared to listen. As I discussed above, this involves drawing on postcolonial sensibilities which utilise self-reflection—particularly questions of methodology and epistemology—in order to begin the process of dismantling academic imperialism (see Noxolo, 2006). In this collaborative setting, intellectual and policy relevance stems from taking genuine notice of the ‘conceptual landscapes’ of research participants. But as Raghuram and Madge (2006) have said, what postcolonial method also requires is participation in an emancipatory politics. I return to this important point in Chapter Seven as I make my case that postcolonial criticism

representative responded with curious trepidation and handed me a document on NGOs and donor collaboration.

provides the conceptual tools to envisage new social relations and in the process *repoliticise* development praxis.

6.5 CONCLUSION: POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE IN THE ACADEMY

In Chapter Six I have shown that the colonising practices and constructed difference that underpins development discourse also saturates academic discourse, in this case the discipline of geography. Similarly, the challenging of binary thinking and emphasis on hybrid, mutually constituted identities which are reflected in NGO strategies of dissent and the actions of individuals in donor agencies, also characterise and underpin postcolonial methodologies.

Speaking of postcolonial studies limited impact to date, Sylvester (1999), nonetheless, argues that the latter is still better placed than any Western agency to reinvent or recover postcolonial agendas of material well-being that matter on the ground. That many of its aficionados choose not to do so just now, declares Sylvester (1999), "...does not mean that they will make similar choices in the future" (1999, 718). Herein lies postcolonialism's opportunity. It is precisely its capacity to work in-between disciplinary thinking and its ability to be both critical of, and empathetic with, the problematic of development that makes postcolonialism such an enticing source for new development praxis. In Chapter Seven I present my case of/for postcolonial geographies, arguing that the *repoliticisation* to be found in specific development sites in Fiji's aid industry represents just that.

CHAPTER 7

Repoliticising the debate: a case of/for postcolonial geographies

7.1 INTRODUCTION

[I]n today's discussion of the significance and dispositions of development, the politics of the production and deployment of knowledge has become an increasingly pivotal question (Slater, 2002: 99).

In Chapter Three I provided Pacific examples of the productive features of development discourse and identified the global standardisation of development planning and management, particularly as it manifests in the functionings of stakeholder workshops. I concluded by arguing that it is these productive features, in this case, the technical logic of managerialism including its language and models, that *depoliticise* the capacity building process. It is *depoliticising* because this logic—this very specific production and deployment of managerialism—does not provide for, or allow, alternatives.

In this penultimate chapter I look at the production and deployment of different forms of development praxis to those that still dominate increasingly globalised (and standardised) development and academic discourses. I open by articulating what postcolonial critique means by 'materiality' and 'politics'. This discussion involves responding to debates that have surfaced over postcolonial studies'

supposed ‘imposition’ in the development arena. I outline Marxian inspired criticisms of postcolonialism and the bases on which these criticisms are raised in order to argue the inseparability of the material and the immaterial, the ‘real’ and the ‘unreal’. The aim of 7.2 is to clarify ‘the political’ in postcolonialism before proposing what a more diffused notion of politics might mean for doing development differently in Fiji’s aid industry.

I argue in 7.3 through 7.5 that the different forms of praxis suggested above; examples of grounded practices, performances, concerns or aspirations of those within Fiji’s aid industry and examples of postcolonial geographies, *repoliticise* these many development sites by offering new critiques, knowledges, methodologies, forms of teaching, strategies of dissent or modes of conceptualisation and collectivity. It is through these new offerings that relevant possibilities emerge, and with them, a newly constituted emancipatory politics. Importantly, this more diffused notion of politics takes the materiality of discourse as a given. This accounts for the Mach I, II and III format for Chapter Seven (section 7.3 through 7.5) implying that ‘doing development differently’ does not involve separating theory (academia) from practice (development) but sees them explicitly as the same enterprise.

So what are some of the dialectics between critique, development and everyday sociality? And, how might these examples of repoliticisation—these criticisms, development conversations and emphases on everyday socialities—inform

Sylvester's (1999) 'disparate tales' debate or what Simon (2006) has more recently characterised as the "dialogue of the deaf" (2006, 10) between development studies and postcolonial studies? Following my clarification on postcolonial 'politics' I consider some of these dialectics in relation to my critique drawing on specific examples from Fiji's aid industry. I then briefly consider new work by geographers who similarly draw on a Foucauldian, feminist and/or postcolonial thread to frame their political interventions. What I am interested in is showing how geographers are moving beyond the various rapprochements that have besieged postcolonial studies to date on the question of development.

7.2 POSTCOLONIALISM, MATERIALITY AND POLITICS

In this section I aim to articulate what postcolonialism means by materiality and politics. These issues are important because by outlining what precisely postcolonial studies mean when arguing the 'materiality of discourse', it can better substantiate how it is equipped to inform development praxis. To begin with I identify what underpins the antagonisms between development studies and postcolonial studies to date, antagonisms which have limited the possibilities of convergence between the two.

As I pointed out in Chapter One, postcolonial critics have not proceeded in the development realm without antagonising a number of its 'critical' predecessors; namely, those of the post-Marxian ilk. Since the early 1990s postcolonial writing has come under intense scrutiny in the context of increasing levels of global

poverty and inequality. Rajan (1997), for instance, argues that postcolonial studies seemingly denies issues of poverty, resource distribution, state violence and human rights violations. Her position is that these important issues are abject, or even unmentionable, within postcolonial studies. Similarly, Ahmad (1995) accuses postcolonial intellectuals of inadequately considering 'everyday sociality'. More specifically, Ahmad (1995) targets the postcolonial preoccupation with the formation of subjectivities and attacks their self-indulgent repudiation of 'real' politics. In a similar way, Dirlik (1994) emphasises the esoteric nature of postcolonial theory, arguing that epistemological and psychic orientations divert attention from "contemporary problems of social, political and cultural domination..." (Dirlik, 1994: 331).

While indebted to its Marxist lineage (Gandhi, 1998), postcolonialism stands in opposition to the former on the issue of 'materiality'. The seeds of Marx's historical materialism are evident in the above criticisms. As Peter Jackson explains, "[t]he common emphasis in all materialist analyses is their refusal to treat the realm of ideas, attitudes, perceptions and values as independent of the forces and relations of production" (Jackson, 1989: 33). Instead, culture is seen, according to Jackson (1989), "...as a reflection of the material conditions of existence" (1989, 33) Following on from this then, material conditions of existence constitute the realm of 'the real' while cultural issues do not. So where economics and politics are situated in the realm of 'the real', ideas, attitudes and values—that is, discourse—belongs to the realm of the 'unreal' (see Eriksson Baaz, 2005).

The aversion to postcolonialism's foray into the field of development also resonates in geography. Though not always referring to postcolonialism, geographers have bemoaned the 'turn to discourse' and the consequences this move entails, particularly in the development setting. For example, while affirming the importance of the production of stories and narratives of development (as part of postcolonial critique), Watts (2000) argues that these will remain just stories and narratives unless committing to the political and material. Development as narrative, adds Watts and McCarthy (1997):

...runs the risk of excluding politics, interest, institutionalised authority and legitimacy and putting in their place a naive sense of sitting around the camp-fire telling each other stories (1997, 77).

Corbridge (1999) warns of the dangers of concentrating on development as discourse and the way this shifts the focus away from material concerns, while Barnett (1997), commenting on the sudden ubiquity of postcolonialism, refers to the "...more or less fierce denunciations coming from certain directions on the Left of a calamitous 'descent into discourse'" (1997, 137). Barnett (1997) describes the charge (by the Left) as signalling "...too close or too lingering an attention to language, rhetoric, or textuality [as] indicat[ing] a retreat from politically engaged, relevant research" (1997, 137). Presenting similar concerns, Martin (2001) relates geography's apparent lack of relevance in practical and policy debates to the

effects of the postmodern and cultural 'turns' and "...the consequential emphasis on 'sexy' philosophical, linguistic and theoretical issues rather than on practical social science" (2001, 189).

Finally, Philo (2000) reflects cautiously on the 'cultural turn' in human geography when highlighting a concern with elevating "immaterial cultural processes, with the constitution of inter subjective meaning systems, with the play of identity politics through the less-than-tangible, often fleeting spaces of texts; signs, symbols, psyches, desires, fears and imaginings" (2000, 33). Moreover, he adds that we may end up being "less attentive to the more 'thingy', bump-into-able, there-in-the-world kinds of 'matter' (the material) with which earlier geographers tended to be more familiar" (2000, 33). In short, concerns within geography hinge on an apparent trend toward *depoliticisation* and *dematerialisation* (see McEwan, 2003).

As a response I reject the presupposition that everyday sociality or something called 'the real' and discourses are incompatible. By aligning 'direct politics' exclusively with 'the material'—where it is assumed that everyday sociality (the material) and epistemological orientations (the immaterial) are somehow unconnected—critics deny the "fact that discourse itself is intensely material" (McEwan, 2003: 342). For example, to imply, as Rajan (1997) does, that resource distribution or human rights abuses concern 'direct politics' while an emphasis on words, textuality and discourse do not, is misleading. Not only are these critical issues and abuses presented and transmitted as textual enunciations, to refute the political impact of the

word and the discourses that produce them is to deny the way development interventions are so cogently produced and deployed.

As I have argued in this thesis, it is through textual representations (project documentation) and the functionings of institutional sites (stakeholder workshops) that civil society is constructed and deemed an object of diminished capacity. It is the authoritative qualities conferred on development ‘experts’—the facilitator, in the case of stakeholder workshops—that provide them with their source of legitimacy and compels others to listen and act. It is through the adoption of authoritative models (the CSI) that workshop proceedings become prescriptive, predictable and depoliticising. Viewing development as a dense ensemble of texts, representations and practices reveal ‘the material’ and the ‘immaterial’ as intimately bound.

Susan Smith (1999) offers a useful articulation of the kind of inclusive politics I am inferring here. According to Smith (1999), to prioritise the formal political arena is to provide only a partial and rather narrow interpretation of politics, as well as giving a particularly restricted account of the identities and allegiances that mobilise political engagement. Her position, rather, is to present politics in a broader sense, as about social participation (or nonparticipation) where there is no clear dividing line between politics and life, economy and culture. Politics is about the process of creating or sustaining categories of similarity or difference whereby “[c]ategorising others and positioning ourselves is what the struggle for power and resources is all about” (Smith, 1999: 130).

Having opened our conceptualising of 'the political', and relieved ourselves of the limited political projections of some postcolonial adversaries, the binaries constructed between 'the material' and 'the immaterial' or 'real politics' and 'formation of subjectivities' no longer hold (see further Eriksson Baaz, 2005). It is this emphasis, on breaking down the binaries that underpin and maintain the aid industry, and its sensitivity to "...forms of struggle and practices of contestation that cannot be fully captured from more conventional perspectives" (Abrahamsen, 2003:210; Chapter Four), that give postcolonial critique its political relevance and potency (see 6.4).

Returning, then, to Watts and McCarthy's (1997) quote above, and recalling examples identified in Chapter Three, if we replace 'the camp-fire' with the 'stakeholder workshop', and substitute the 'naive telling of stories' with 'the telling of narratives of capacity building', we are presented with a familiar institutional site from where development's authority and legitimacy derives. Development discourse is conceived and articulated through the story telling of specific narratives (by those in authority) in specific institutional sites. By seemingly trivialising the potential effects of the production of narratives, these authors (such as Watts and McCarthy, 1997) run the risk of misrecognising the ways in which discourses frame action and are made material.

7.3 DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY – MACH I

In Chapter's Two and Three I exposed development discourse—donor-driven capacity building processes, in this case—as both an artificial construct and as only 'one way', or form, of how development might be produced and deployed. I undertook a distinctly Foucauldian tack, drawing almost exclusively on *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). As a precursory note to the current discussion on repoliticisation I want to highlight a later work by Foucault (1983) published as an interview. The article is a valuable clarification of the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and focuses, as one of its conversations, on the role of the intellectual. The interview reaffirms his continued potency in the field of development particularly on issues of critique, transformation, and the “practical work” (Raulet in Foucault, 1983: 206), as his interviewer put it, of the intellectual.

When asked, what is the nature of the present Foucault (1983) responded, stating that such a question does not simply consist of a characterisation of what we are. Rather, that any diagnosis would involve “...following lines of fragility in the present - in managing to grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is” (1983, 206). Reflecting the centrality of ‘the history of ideas’ to his work (see 4.2), Foucault (1983) includes in his protracted response to the question that:

...recourse to history...is meaningful to the extent that history serves to show how that-which-is has not always been; i.e., that the things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters

and chances, during the course of a precarious and fragile history. What reason perceives as *its* necessity, or rather, what different forms of rationality offer as their necessary being, can perfectly well be shown to have a history; and the network of contingencies from which it emerges can be traced. Which is not to say, however, that these forms of rationality were irrational. It means that they reside on a base of human practice and human history; and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made (Foucault, 1983: 206 emphasis in original).

Foucault (1983) intimates the role of the intellectual as part of this recourse to history:

I would say also, about the work of the intellectual, that it is fruitful in a certain way to describe that-which-is by making it appear as something that might not be, or that might not be as it is. [That]...any description must always be made in accordance with [the] kinds of virtual fracture [referring here to lines of fragility in the present] which open up the space of freedom understood as a space of concrete freedom, i.e., of possible transformation (Foucault, 1983: 206).

In other words, Foucault (1983) believes the importance of academic work lies, firstly, in identifying that the past serves an important function precisely because of

its indeterminacy. By emphasising the past (and present) precarious and fragile development, that-which-is is made to appear “...as something that might not be” (Foucault, 1983: 206) in the future. Secondly, once establishing the indeterminacy of history and subsequent fragility of the present, academic work can read into the “...confluence of encounters and chances” (Foucault, 1983: 206) fractures and gaps, spaces of (concrete) transformation.

In Chapter Four (4.5) I focused on the highly versatile cross-sectorial individual, Laisa. Her motivation stems from her knowledge of the inherent problems of past development interventions in the region and her understanding of the importance of methodology. According to Laisa, the lack of appropriate analysis and monitoring results in the perpetuation of the myth that market oriented, export driven economic models inevitably lead to equitable outcomes in the Pacific. Laisa refutes the ‘trickle down’ rationale in the very specific context of the region, arguing, rather, that well designed social analysis and monitoring programmes will reveal the limits of current ‘one size fits all’ models, while enabling targeted and equitable distribution of government resources. For Laisa, professional self-reflexivity among those in positions of power in Fiji and in donor agencies, and the subsequent implementation of a comprehensive cross-disciplinary approach to development that would follow, will contribute to institutional change. Laisa’s sociological training makes possible an appreciation of the function of critique and the conceptual understanding required to seize the potential in new strategies and strip back the dictates of development discourse in the region.

Reflecting a similar desire and urgency, several other interviewees argued that critique at a base level is crucial, particularly in those institutions suffering from bureaucratic inertia, inflexible operational and fieldwork practices or a general level of ineptitude (Development practitioner, Interview 1, 2002; see Appendix Item 5 pages 13 - 16). The dissident NGO representatives described in Chapter Four, for example, felt compelled to challenge, at a fundamental level, the donor-defined functionings of the stakeholder workshop. Changing the language and concepts to be more in line with Pacific aims and concerns was their way of contesting this site's rigidities; both definitional and functional. As Duituturaga (Development Practitioner, Interview 2: 2002; see also Duituturaga, 2001) makes clear, while people in key positions in donor organisations have a desire to work with the Pacific and look at development from a Pacific perspective "...they just don't know how..." (Duituturaga, Interview 2: 2002; see also Low and Davenport, 2002).

This is perhaps one of postcolonialism's great challenges to development orthodoxy; to communicate to those in key positions that what is, in fact, sought—as part of a Pacific perspective—is questioning of their own theoretical positioning. Such a shift would enable the possibility of seeing that-which-is appear as something that might not be in the future (Foucault, 1983). From this decentred theoretical location it becomes possible to 'take a peek' outside development's "Eurocentric 'world-picturing'" (Sidaway 2000, cited in Raghuram and Madge, 2006: 270-1). The task of dismantling development's self-evidence as a necessary

precursor to development intervention is precisely what is required to move beyond this Eurocentric 'world picturing'. As Laisa argues, forging different conceptual understandings is a key to producing appropriate and more equitable modes of praxis.

In Chapter Four I also emphasised forms of contestation and transformation, specifically; strategies and programmes that reflect localised and context specific capacity building. In this case, I highlighted one particular NGO's alternative version of conceiving and undertaking 'development'. WAC's rehearsing of collective futures through playback theatre provides one such vehicle to conceiving and undertaking development differently. In this case, localised context specific capacity building comes in a very different form to that, for example, prescribed within a stakeholder workshop. New identities are forged through performance that do not rely upon reproducing difference but instead draw on historical commonalities. The following interview extract describing one particular performance captures this quite vividly:

[W]e put in traditional stories – a Fijian one...and the Indian one I bought in was when the Girmitiyas people [first] came to Fiji and were shipwrecked and they nearly all drowned. And when the Fijians hear that story they are very moved by it. They had no idea that indentured labourers were slaves. Although it's in our books they didn't really [know]...There are always comments in the plays and they are really shocked at the conditions and

realise how hard it was for the Indians...it was not their choice...they thought they were going down the road [from India]...[S]o history is also very important for people to know because it changes their idea about the future (WAC Representative, Interview 2, 2002).

WAC's theatrical performances present a unique method of 'development' that connects creative forms of subjectivities with the 'everyday sociality' and material experiences of people living in Fiji. Rather than reflecting a 'self-indulgent' voyeurism, as Ahmad (1995) might have us believe, these stories and the way they are received inform and reflect the thinking inherent in much of postcolonial criticism. By highlighting the repoliticisation of these spaces—for example, the production of new languages, rally points of collective action and new identities through performance—we see the inseparability of the "bump-into-able, stubbornly there-in-the-world kinds of 'matter'" and the "less-than-tangible, often fleeting spaces of texts, signs, symbols, psyches, desire, fears and imaginings" (Philo, 2000:33). Nagar (2002) confirms a similar link between performance and politics when writing on women's theatre in North India. Focusing on the way performance is used to contest traditional notions of 'the public', 'private' and 'politics', Nagar (2002) highlights how these redefinitions represent strategies for social and personal transformation. Importantly, the communities were acutely aware and actively embraced theatre as "...a vehicle to promote an alternative vision of development, a vision in which struggles over economic and political rights of the

marginalised are viewed as inseparable from the development of awareness, of imagination, of a culture of the mind” (Nagar, 2002: 56).

Chapter Five moved the discussion from one of struggles in the present; reading NGO challenges to development discourse as creating and reflecting ‘spaces of transformation’, to focusing on Fiji’s colonial legacies and their present manifestations. The aim of Chapter Five was two-fold. First, I wanted to identify a serious omission in the development industry literature; namely, the sparse reference and recognition of issues of identity as integral to understanding development relations. Second, I wanted to historicise traditions, ethnicity, religion and gender relations in Fiji to demonstrate both their contingent and constructed nature (reflected in the present potential of their appropriation), and to highlight how the British colonial administration, through its policies, created a Fiji where issues of identity and development would always be intimately bound.

As those engaged in the aid industry declared so often, identities very much condition and determine development limits and opportunities. Limits, in that certain political and religious leaders seize on idealised and static notions of the tradition-religion nexus in order to legitimise and justify exclusionary practices. Recognising the centrality of identity in development relations also provides opportunities. As outlined in Chapter Five, recounting, historically, the indeterminate and changing features and definitions of tradition or religion, for example, enables alternative and inclusive ways of conceiving these often highly

emotive terms. Throughout this thesis I tried to instil and encourage more diffused and differentiated definitions that avoid the oppositionality that characterise idealised and static notions, opting, rather, for those that embrace engagement and rearticulation (Ashcroft, 2001).

7.4 DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY – MACH II

In terms of new work by geographers, the fact that Foucauldian, feminist and/or postcolonially-inspired development geographers view methodology—and I would like to include pedagogy here—with such vigour and centrality i.e., the impulse to ground their philosophies in their actions and practices, confirms and re-enforces the materiality and politics of their work. Of course, the contribution of feminist geography¹²⁰ to this grounding has been fundamental and far-reaching over the past decade and a half as the latter sought to challenge ‘objectivist’ social science (England, 1994; Gilbert, 1994; Katz, 1992, 1994; McDowell, 1992). It should be said too that these interventions were very much a precursor to present drives toward decolonising the discipline.

Reflecting on the multiple (political) processes at work during their own PhD fieldwork and drawing on other work by geographers, Raghuram and Madge (2006) suggest ways to provincialise Western theory (Chakraborty, 2000) in order to move towards postcolonial methods for development research. First, they propose considering theory as practice where theory and practice are treated as

¹²⁰ And feminism more generally.

co-constituting, not oppositional. This involves breaking down the unhelpful binary that artificially separates theoretically led approaches (theory as ‘belonging’ to and in the ivory tower) from strongly empirical concepts of knowledge. Raghuram and Madge (2006), instead, posit that “...we all practice and live out our theories” (2006, 278). Raghuram and Madge (2006) also urge that we reconfigure our methods of theorization to meet the imperatives of postcolonial methods. This involves being conscious of the processes of selection (of theories) and our pre-knowledges that influence “...*how we know what we know...*” (Raghuram and Madge, 2006: 279, emphasis in original). Importantly, this entails understanding and moving between the different levels of abstraction involved in intellectual work in order to destabilise theory. On this issue the authors draw on Johnston *et al* (2004 cited in Raghuram and Madge, 2006: 279):

Moving between levels includes re-embedding our theories in the denseness of the particular [read; the complex tapestry of everyday socialities], so that our understanding of the particular is enhanced. Theorisation, therefore, involves a double articulation: a move away from the complexities of individual instances to relatively simplified concepts, a move back to the concrete with our explanation enhanced...In concretion, our theory finds further correction or elaboration (Johnston *et al* 2004 cited in Raghuram and Madge, 2006: 279).

It is one thing to undertake the inevitable abstraction involved in intellectual work when trying to attain generalisability and with that, intentionally or otherwise, secure the authority of 'theory'. It is quite another to return this same theory to the concrete tapestry of the particular in order to enhance its explanatory value. Elaborating further on this, Raghuram and Madge (2006) suggest that it is simply not enough to provincialise northern theories. Rather, what is required is that "...we need to move southern knowledges to a level of abstraction that shakes up the idea that generality emanates [only] from northern knowledge construction while particularity is synonymous with southern knowledges" (Raghuram and Madge, 2006: 279-280).

Similar to the way Raghuram and Madge (2006) advocate deconstructing the way we think about the theories we implement, Reid-Henry (2003) proposes the need to unpack existing concepts of reflexivity in order to be more "...cognizant of [the] relationship between the practice of fieldwork and the production of knowledge..." (2003, 185). Reflexivity, according to Gillian Rose (1997), refers to a self-awareness of one's own positionality which informs the process of 'doing' research in the field and assuring that inequitable research relations are minimized. According to Reid-Henry (2003), reflexivity promotes us as representing the field unproblematically as 'our' field, where we are "...in control of all the relationships of the field: carefully incorporating a view here, ensuring we are not abusing our power as researcher there" (2003, 194). Reid-Henry (2003) presents a more somatic conception of reflexivity; one that sees places, people and things as

actively involved in our research practice. Drawing on Latour's work on actor networks, he highlights the way other actants interact with the practice of research and, therefore, the production of knowledge. For Reid-Henry (2003), fieldwork showed that research is constituted through a variety of actants in a network: "field subjects and interviewees, and sometimes non-human components, the news or a chance happening" (2003, 193). So rather than view knowledge construction, all be it reflexively, as a simple consequence of the researcher's field practice, he emphasizes the way these actants continually impact on the entire research undertaking. Far from being the sole author of his work, Reid-Henry (2003) highlights the role and effect of un-acknowledged co-authors of our research praxis¹²¹.

Both Reid-Henry (2003) and Raghuram and Madge (2006) capture the deconstructive mood and dialectics between critique, development and everyday socialities that I have focused on thus far in this section. I also want to add that pedagogy plays an equally central role in the production and deployment of different forms of praxis as geographers¹²² ground their philosophies in their actions and practices. To begin this brief synopsis of the kind of pedagogy I am referring to I want to borrow a quote from an editorial in the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* (Heyman 2000 cited in Hay, 2001):

¹²¹ Paradoxically, given his argument, his paper is sole-authored. Though the concept of adding non-human contributors as co-authors could present a bit of challenge to editors and publishers.

¹²² And, of course, not just those involved in the broad field of development.

Critical human geography must make radical pedagogy a central concern—and must recognise the classroom as a site of practical political engagement (Heyman, 2000 in Hay, 2001: 141).

In 6.2 I looked at the way some academic discourse perpetuates social difference in its research and writing, especially in the context of the ‘Third World’. I subsequently linked this continued discursive colonialism to the urgent need to decolonise (development) geography (see also Howitt, 2001). I then argued (in 6.4) that the emergence of postcolonial methods was a relevant response to specific social pressures and diverse circumstances given the failed promise of participatory methods amidst increased global inequality and chronic world poverty. I recount these points for two reasons.

First, as a field-oriented sub-discipline, development geography is particularly well placed to deploy the kinds of practical political engagement (Heyman, 2000) and material influence (Castree, 2000) that are congruent with disciplinary decolonisation and postcolonial methods. In line with one of the central positions taken in the thesis—that of breaking away from binaries, in this case, ‘the field’/ ‘non-field’ dichotomy (Katz, 1994)—fieldwork is indeed *part of* ‘the classroom’ to which Heyman (2000) refers.

With this in mind, I consider the University of Sydney’s Third Year geography course in Asia-Pacific Development which involves a month-long intensive field trip

to Vanuatu and Fiji (Connell, 2006). Representing a very different learning experience in terms of setting and evaluation, students complete a daily journal for the duration of the field trip documenting their personal journeys of "...discovery, autonomy, reflexivity and emerging cultural sensitivity" (2006, 17). The course and its assessment, which includes examining emergent understandings of other nations in the context of significant cultural diversity, offers a first-hand experience of various concepts of development and social justice. As Connell (2006, 27) reflects, "In an old-fashioned sense, but in the most relevant way, they [students] have learned, mainly through looking and talking, an extraordinary amount of geography through the soles of their feet...". Recalling Johnston *et al* (2004 cited in Raghuram and Madge, 2006), the Asia-Pacific Development course provides students the opportunity to embed theories in the denseness of the particular, to 'test' the applicability of theories through periodic seminars, informal tutorials and one-off discussions, all the while enhancing the concretion and explanatory value of theories. The course is also a good example of the kind of 'grounded empiricism' advocated by development practitioners in Fiji, as one practitioner noted during the May 2002 interview schedule:

[W]e are trying to develop links between USP [the University of the South Pacific, Fiji] and other institutions of learning around research capacity... *We need to get the University out into the community and with NGOs and we need to get the community into the University* talking to people about real issues (Development Practitioner, Interview 1, 2002, emphasis added).

While this last comment re-enforces the notion of theory and practice as separate entities i.e., talking about *real issues*¹²³, the links and enhanced relationships the practitioner is calling for speaks to the forms of teaching implicit in the University of Sydney's Asia-Pacific Development course.

In a more probing reflection on UK students undertaking course fieldwork in The Gambia (Africa), Abbott (2006) outlines the kinds of critical pedagogy required to disrupt the 'whiteness'¹²⁴ of fieldwork in geography. According to Abbott (2006), continuities persist between the imperialist history of geographical exploration and present-day overseas fieldtrips. Reflecting on key sites of the transatlantic slave trade, Abbott (2006) argues that overseas fieldtrips will remain a normalised and apolitical practice structured by considerations of practicalities and eventualities unless deeper questions are posed on the complex interplay of power, privilege, race and representation. For Abbott (2006), disrupting course fieldwork's whiteness will begin once we undertake:

...a political analysis of long-haul field study activities, uncover accounts, discover new narratives and do better and more critical research about

¹²³ Which assumes that those issues talked about in Universities are not somehow 'real'.

¹²⁴ Abbott (2006) draws on McDowell and Sharpe (1999) and Delaney (2002) when elaborating on whiteness as a social construction which reflects politics in society. In the context of the United States, she notes, whiteness is grounded in the brutal history of slavery and black segregation. Whiteness is associated with privilege, and in the location of privilege, "whiteness is an ideological formation that is built on its historical dominance over others" (Abbott, 2006: 333).

geography's historical role as purveyors of boundaries on spaces of power and hierarchy...(Abbott, 2006: 337).

I suggest from these two reflections on student fieldtrips, that the field-oriented sub-discipline of development geography is a prime location for initiating decolonisation once tough questions are posed (Abbott, 2006), and new forms of pedagogy established and embraced (Connell, 2006)¹²⁵.

7.5 DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY – MACH III

But, of course, there are other classrooms, one being the more traditional lecture hall variety. Here too, as in the case of the 'field classroom', the lecture hall is a vital site of social activism (Hay, 2001). Commenting on activism in Higher Education, Hay (2001) focuses on the material and political influence of critical pedagogy in which changing classrooms and universities equates, quite literally, to changing the world. Reflecting the kinds of repoliticisation I have sort to highlight in this chapter, Hay (2001) forcefully recommends academics:

...acknowledge the social-transformative potential of our classrooms and [to] then ensure that we shape them so they are not complicit in perpetuating and reproducing the very power relations that we seek to dismantle in other parts of our activist lives (2001, 141).

Similarly, and pre-empting the kind of pedagogy produced and deployed by Connell (2006), Howitt (2001) advocates that the new challenge for geographical education in tertiary institutions is to construct:

...engagements between 'students' in diverse settings, inside and beyond the confines of the conventional classroom, to address the intellectual, social, economic and environmental consequences of 'deep colonising'...(2001, 164).

Development geography's recent foray into postcolonial criticism is a productive move towards achieving such goals. Indeed, what and how we teach, what methods we use to undertake research, and how we develop and nurture relationships with informants and others, are all very political acts as we create and disseminate knowledges about other peoples and places. Whether encouraging justice, tolerance or activism in teaching (Hay, 2001; Howitt, 2001), critiquing our educational institutions and practices (Loomba, 1998; Hodge and Lester, 2006) or forming negotiated and shared meanings (Nagar with Ali, 2003) with development 'beneficiaries', practitioners, other academics or those in positions of power within government and aid agencies, we are 'already in the field' (see also McFarlane, 2006). As Howitt (2001) makes clear, to promote dialectical unity between teaching, research and community service we need to refrain from treating them as

¹²⁵ As Connell (2006) remarks, if student assessments are anything to go by, the course has certainly been embraced for its originality and life-altering potential.

alternative career paths and instead view them as necessarily linked as a way of encouraging constructive engagement.

This is the kind of dialectics I sought to facilitate in my interviews. For example, the collaborative ethos that is the basis of creating shared meanings informed my efforts toward self-description and self-critique. Laying bare my epistemological viewpoint when introducing myself and posing questions that potentially undermined my role and the relevance of my research seemed to instil a sense of connectivity between the research participants and myself¹²⁶. Revealing myself as a fellow advocate with similar apprehensions to what development ‘as practiced’ can achieve¹²⁷, in many cases appeared to help transcend the kinds of binaries that are often reinforced in interviews.

7.6 CONCLUSION: REPOLITICISATION AND CREATING CONVERGENCE

To conclude Chapter Seven I return to the question posed in the Introduction. How might the examples of repoliticisation identified above inform Sylvester's (1999) ‘disparate tales’ debate or what Simon (2006) has more recently characterised as the “dialogue of the deaf” (2006, 10) between development studies and postcolonial studies? Sharpe and Briggs (2006), McFarlane (2006) and Simon (2006) indicate what might be involved in “[f]inding common ground and moving on” (2006, 17), to use David Simon's phrase. For Sharpe and Briggs (2006),

¹²⁶ I do not want to overstate the point, but at the same time this sense certainly filtered through.

¹²⁷ This was particularly the case when interviewing NGO representatives and Development Practitioners.

disparity between development and postcolonial studies can be partly explained by differences in political attitude, wariness over motives and divergence in specialised languages used to articulate relevant issues. Convergence, therefore, would involve clarity and transparency in attitude, motives and language whereby new levels of dialogue could be developed and better outcomes attained. McFarlane (2006) focuses on transnational development networks and concludes, among other things, that development needs more unrestrained concepts of agency and power, while postcolonial approaches, "...could benefit from a greater alertness...[to] the structuring role of resources and institutions in the creation and maintenance of networks" (2006, 35). For Simon (2006), convergence would first involve differentiating between development-as-modernisation and critical or postdevelopment (however broadly defined). Only then, according to Simon (2006), could we begin to link local identities, practices and agendas to broader and multiscale campaigns and 'projects' for progressive and radical change "...that are substantially postcolonial and critically (post)developmental" (2006, 17).

The examples presented in this thesis either implicitly or explicitly engender the kinds of confluence that Sharpe and Briggs (2006), McFarlane (2006) and Simon (2006) advocate. Indeed, I have attempted to provide clarity of political attitude (offering definitions of politics (7.2)) and transparency of motives (through a clear articulation of intentions and limitation (Chapter Six)). I have sort to discuss broader concepts of agency (for example, contradiction and transformation (Chapter Four)), while being alert to the structuring role of institutions (through a consideration of

stakeholder workshops and the logic of managerialism (Chapter Three)). I have also proposed linking local identities, practices and agendas to broader projects of progressive change (dissenting NGO voices and a critical pedagogy (Chapter Four and above)).

As noted in 6.5, Sylvester (1999) declares that postcolonialism's potential lies in its capacity to work in-between disciplinary thinking and its ability to be both critical of and empathetic with the problematic of development. I too share this notion, but also remain equally optimistic of development's critical potential, problematic though it is (see Chapter Eight). Given this, the kinds of critiques, knowledges, methodologies, forms of teaching, strategies of dissent, modes of conceptualisation and collectivity identified in this chapter, and in the thesis more broadly, reflect both postcolonialism's deconstructive sentiment and development's ongoing promise.

CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this concluding chapter I re-examine several key themes raised in this thesis. I elevate specific themes of postcolonial critique because I see them as potentially the most potent contributions to development praxis. Certainly, I acknowledge that, to date, development studies has significantly more credibility on how development is practiced than postcolonialism. But I feel that with sustained critique, including an emphasis on the way new political tactics transform the way development discourse is conducted, postcolonial criticism can assert its credentials and show its relevance and application to development.

In 8.2 I outline how my analysis contributes to the extensive and diverse collection of critical studies and writings on the Pacific. I posit the importance of timing and position my discussion in relation to two opposing forces currently demanding attention in development circles. In 8.3 I reassess my emphasis on NGO activities in Fiji's aid industry—their subversive and transformative effects on development's standardising proclivity—in relations to Kothari's (2005) pivotal question; "how can critical voices be effective within a neoliberal development agenda?" (Kothari, 2005: 444).

Having raised several limitations of the thesis I then conclude the chapter by focusing on two specific implications for Fiji's aid industry. The first involves

reasserting the critical importance of methodological choice as part of development interventions. The second draws attention to the significance of co-constructing languages and meanings as a catalyst for the production of new (conciliatory) cultural forms in the country.

8.2 TIMELY NARRATIVES: POSTCOLONIALISM and DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

How does my postcolonial inquiry, informed by the kinds of sensibilities identified throughout this thesis, contribute to the extensive and diverse collection of critical studies and writings on the South Pacific? The question of timing is central. On the one hand, donors are now increasingly more vocal on the urgency of economic and political reforms in Melanesia¹²⁸. The self-evidence that underpins this increased ‘megaphone’ diplomacy (Henderson, 2003), which evidently continues to mesmerize strategic planners and policy ‘experts’ (Doty, 1996 cited in Power, 2000: 98), remains unequivocal. Indeed, Regional development institutions, Pacific governments and political elites have eagerly adopted the two ‘goods’ of economic development and democracy (Henderson, 2003; Roberts *et al*, 2007; Storey and Murray, 2001; Sutherland, 2000; see also Abrahamsen, 2000 in the African context). Moreover, these development interventions facilitate policies far narrower in scope and orientation, and “[a]s a result, contemporary development practice has largely regressed to post-war technocentric and modernisation philosophies”

¹²⁸ This urgency has been exacerbated, or so this line of argument goes, by the apparent failures of development in the ‘arc of instability’ which, according to Connell (2007b), has “...brought new and more direct external intervention...” (2007b, 116) upon the region.

(Storey and Murray, 2001: 292; see also Kothari, 2005). Roberts *et al* (2007) also emphasise this point in relation to the Pacific Islands Forum 'Pacific Plan' which advocates a "highly technocratic...and narrow conceptualisation of governance..." (2007, 967).

On the other hand, an equally vocal group, though considerably smaller in number and still marginal compared with their mainstream counterpart, urge genuine priority for cultural considerations in development planning and programmes (Connell, 2007b; Douglas, 1998, 2000; Hooper, 2000; Maiava, 2001; Overton *et al*, 1999; see Sen, 2000 and Chapter Five (5.2)). Connell (2007b) quite rightly states that the 'cultural turn' has largely bypassed literature on the Pacific and "...is almost absent from the discourses of development planners, other than in rhetorical form, or as an explanation for failed projects" (2007, 117). The fact that increasing levels of inequality, poverty and environmental damage throughout the South Pacific (Hooper, 2000; Overton *et al*, 1999) might have occurred as a *result* of culturally (and environmentally) bereft economic and political reforms is not taken seriously by hardened neoliberal advocates.

Development in the early 2000s in the South Pacific is characterised by this apparent impasse; an increasingly parochial development discourse on the one hand, a resolute stance on the critical relevance of cultural considerations to

development¹²⁹, on the other. My position is that at this critical juncture or moment, postcolonial sensibilities provide a corridor where the two might better communicate. As Abrahamsen (2003) reminds us, and as I have emphasised throughout this thesis, postcolonialism's emphasis on "...fluidity, interconnectedness and constitutive relationships" (2003, 197) enables room for conversation drawing on a variety of inspirations and conceptual resources.

My contribution to the critical literature on development in the South Pacific, it is hoped, is to be viewed in this light. At a time of heightened divisiveness over the 'right' path for 'development', I advocate both a critical deconstruction of development's self-evidence and explication of its depoliticising effects, while simultaneously identify the critical voices, including expressions of collective Pacific identities, that challenge, subvert and transform the standardisation implicit in many of development's institutional sites. In other words, I do not reject development but remain optimistic of development's *yet to be realised* promise (see further below). So in this sense, I strongly concur with Crocombe's (1994 cited in Hooper, 2000) statement that culture and development are, and remain, 'good' words in the Pacific "...needing, and receiving, constant attention" (cited in Hooper, 2000: 1).

As I have made clear in this thesis, raising the collaborative potential of postcolonial sensibilities is, I think, important when envisioning co-constructed

¹²⁹ Importantly, I distinguish here between the nuanced understandings implicit in this stance to that

futures. But there is another almost inevitable question that emerges in any discussion of ‘development futures’ (see Hickey and Mohan, 2004). Do examples of ‘subversion’ and ‘transformation’ of development’s standardisation, such as those I have emphasised in this thesis, actually alter the status quo?

8.3 BEYOND ‘ORDERING OF DISSENT’

Highlighting the ‘adverse incorporation’ of participatory approaches to development, Uma Kothari (2005) uncovers how the professionalising and technicalising of neoliberal development processes shape “...expressions of dissent and potentially [limit] critical, challenging and emancipatory approaches” (2005, 437; see also Brown, 2004; Cooke and Kothari, 2001¹³⁰). Kothari (2005) coins this process of monopolisation the ‘ordering of dissent’. Kothari (2005) concludes her article by arguing that many critiques of development are restricted to challenging orthodox practices and techniques which only lead to “...limited methodological revisionism instead of [a] more wholesale questioning of the discourse” (2005, 443). Drawing on Crush (1995), Kothari (1995) concludes that, given the difficulty of moving outside the managerial and technical framing of development, the question then becomes “...how can critical voices be effective within a neoliberal development agenda” (Kothari, 2005: 444).

held within the ‘culturalist’ position identified in Chapter One (1.3).

¹³⁰ Neil Smith (2005) refers to the way radical ideas have a way of being watered down and getting “...mulched back into the mainstream” (2005, 890).

A decade earlier Crush (1995) posed the same dilemma when asking; [i]s there a way of writing (speaking or thinking) beyond the language of development (1995, 18)? While asserting the importance of self-critique which underscored the question, he ultimately conceded that even his edited book (which is a comprehensive critique of development) is only made possible by the languages of development, and may in fact perpetuate its reproduction. Confirming the apparent impossibility of writing, speaking or thinking beyond the language of development (which is essentially Kothari's conclusion), Crush (1995) then draws on Foucault to recast his role and that of the book. We should instead think of development as a "...complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1990 cited in Crush, 1995: 20).

Taking these clarifications as a point of departure, moving beyond the 'ordering of dissent' and 'limited methodological revisionism' (Kothari, 2005) might involve recognising the complex and unstable processes at play as development discourse both asserts its instrumental effects and is simultaneously hindered by opposing strategies and points of resistance. In this sense, the wholesale questioning of the discourse, which involves the harder task of 'unpacking' the complexity of discourses to find the presence of gaps and contradictions, might disclose the way critical voices *are* having their effect on the neoliberal development agenda. This was very much the kind of 'wholesale questioning' that guided this thesis.

For example, Part I addressed the structuring features of development discourse—its languages, institutional sites, concepts etc.—and emphasised their depoliticising effects on capacity building in Fiji's aid industry. Part II identified just how unstable discourses can be and pointed out their fragility, and importantly, the subsequent transformative potential that is embedded within them. The examples of resistance and subversion in Fiji's aid industry exposed development's gaps and contradictions. Part III foreground other strategies and points of resistance as I 'unpacked' academia, the other often forgotten site of development, thus proposing different ways of conceiving 'development'.

In this way the subversions and transformations of development's standardisation, evidenced by NGO activities in Fiji's aid industry, for instance, do indeed alter the status quo within these very specific development settings as new languages and concepts are produced. This does not involve writing, speaking or thinking *beyond* the language of development, but will almost certainly entail, for both development workers and academics alike, continual vigilance when it comes to questioning, dismantling, and locating gaps and contradictions within development's future incarnations. Foucault's (1983) elucidation is again worth restating; by "...following lines of fragility in the present" we can "...grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is (1983, 206)" in the future.

It is in this sense that I want to reiterate the valuable contribution of the newly cast postdevelopment literature, such as that identified in Chapter One (Cupples *et al* 2007; Curry, 2003; Gibson-Graham, 2005; McGregor, 2007; McKinnon, 2007, 2008). What these analyses have in common is a renewed hope born of the creative multiplicity of emancipatory indigenous practices that work within the malleable structures of neoliberal development discourse. Whether through hybrid grassroots strategies (Cupples *et al* 2007), indigenous inflections of the market economy (Curry, 2003) or migrant entrepreneurialism (Gibson-Graham, 2005), there is much to indicate the effectiveness of such 'critical voices' vis-à-vis development's framing and monopolising effects (Kothari, 2005). The convergence of the kinds of emphases in these accounts and those of postcolonial works, such as this one, bode well for the futures suggested by Foucault and others and increasingly realised by the participants in these studies. It would seem, at least drawing on these latest examples of postdevelopment, that the 'status quo' is considerably more fragile and open to rearticulation than early versions suggested.

8.4 THESIS LIMITATIONS

Given the depth of analysis required by a study such as this, it is almost to be expected that some facets in terms of scope will be partial and therefore constitute limitations¹³¹. To this end, and without shrinking from my responsibility for any oversights or silences (of which there could be many), the following limitations are

¹³¹ Not least, for the reason of the epistemological leaning of the reader.

presented as an inventory of areas deserving further inquiry in the case of Fiji's aid industry, more so than a simple list of omissions.

Firstly, I did not include in my interview schedule what focus groups or individual interviews with community members or 'beneficiaries' sought to gain from the projects of the NGOs involved in the study. In other words, it could be argued I only engaged those largely privileged themselves, and evidently produced a body of work itself removed from the actual workings of development projects¹³². Further research at the community level could certainly enhance the analysis of development relations in Fiji by including a 'third link' with these 'beneficiaries' of donor and NGO activities, thus adding a more localised and specific element. This complementary layer of the development dynamic, in terms of relations, could demonstrate a decidedly more contextualised picture of the significance of issues of identity, for instance, than that presented here.

Secondly, having embraced the informant inspired shift as part of my second fieldtrip to Fiji and pursued the cultural considerations gleaned from the first fieldtrip, the theme of advocacy was eventually dropped. While the reason for this was one of prioritising the issues most relevant to participants (see Chapter Five), a case for further study on this aspect of development aid in the region will be increasingly significant. As I stated earlier in this chapter (8.2), the heightened

¹³² The time I was able to spend in Fiji to undertake the research for this thesis was considerably limited and therefore certainly reduced the possibility of pursuing a more comprehensive sample of research participants including, of course, project 'beneficiaries'.

parochialism which characterises current donor and, now, Regional development institution's interventions in the South Pacific, will almost inevitably bring into the spotlight the lobbying and advocacy capabilities of NGOs that seek to impact on policies and activities of these dominant players in the region.

A third and fourth limitation of this thesis is the minimal reference to both regional issues, referring here to 'the east-west divide' in Fiji¹³³, and the question of class relations in the country¹³⁴. Again, a similar explanation to that given above in terms of advocacy largely dictated these omissions. Though obviously just because these issues were not raised as consistently as the other issues of identity by the research participants does not automatically mean they do not feature as determining factors in the way aid relations are undertaken or Fijian politics conducted. For example, analyses focusing specifically on class relations in the country would highlight the extent to which class issues within both Indo-Fijian and Indigenous Fijian communities are also at play in Fiji. Such an undertaking might also have the effect of minimising or downplaying the over-emphasis on ethnicity as 'the' defining feature of contemporary Fiji.

8.5 IMPLICATIONS: GEOGRAPHY'S ONGOING INTERVENTIONS

¹³³ Acknowledging my over-simplified version of this complex issue, 'the east-west divide' (identified briefly in 5.4) essentially refers to the colonially-created imbalance between the politically dominant Eastern chiefs—who still dominate Fiji party politics—and the politically weak yet agriculturally and commercially strong Western chiefs (Thomas, 1990).

¹³⁴ See appendix item 5 page 37 as one example of the few references to class relations.

In Chapter One I highlighted concerns raised by one of Australia's prominent development geographers (Connell cited in Rugendyke, 2005). Connell's explanation for the apparent decline in number in the sub-discipline included the advent of post-modern reflections, a wariness of academic imperialism and the emergence of self-criticism in the development field. This thesis has attempted to present these important considerations as integral to a rejuvenated development geography. Of course, Connell (2006, 2007a, 2007b) himself remains a prominent figure with these very concerns and he is certainly not alone.

Tackling the implications of postdevelopment, postcolonialism and methodological and epistemological issues for their development work, Antipodean geographers in the mid-2000s are affirming the 'health' of development geography both in Australian geography departments and in departments throughout the South Pacific (see for example Curry, 2003; Malam, 2004, 2006; McGregor, 2005a, 2005b, 2007; McKinnon, 2005, 2006, 2007; Schech and Haggis, 2002; Schech and Vas Dev, 2007; Wright *et al*, 2007)¹³⁵. This momentum also has the effect of redressing the imbalance of the largely Anglo-centric dominated field of postcolonial geography.

For the remainder of this final section I want to focus specifically on two implications of this thesis for the aid industry in Fiji. Both lie at the forefront of

¹³⁵ Such a statement might imply that Australian geographers had not 'engaged' postdevelopment and postcolonial understanding prior to this. This, of course, is not the case. The point is made as a

postcolonial sensibilities and both share the critical edge which place them beyond a limited revisionism. Firstly, the issue of methodology. As I discussed at length in Chapter Six, the kinds of critical methodological and epistemological questions only more recently being posed within geography¹³⁶ are yet to be confronted in any comprehensive way by those working within development institutions operating throughout the region.

In Chapter Six I gave the example of the resentment and apathy felt by one NGO representative in Fiji in response to a donor's apparent lack of reciprocity, having undertaken research over several days on the organisation. By accentuating the importance of methodologies and the epistemological choices that underpin them, development relations might produce more enriching and collaborative interactions. In a decidedly more positive example of development relations in Fiji's aid industry, a newly appointed head of a prominent UN agency employed the kind of inclusive approach proffered by NGOs as the following interview extract shows:

So...the head of [the UN agency in the country] was prepared to come down and talk to local NGOs and discuss things. We had several representatives before him...they always operated at the [upper levels], they contacted ministers and never actually came down [to talk to us in person]...But he was completely different! He got involved in the work with us and

way of saying that in spite of the kinds of legitimate concerns raised by Connell, the sub-discipline is alive and well in the Antipodes.

participated in the development of the project (NGO Representative, Interview 1: 2002).

What is clear in this example is the difference that a collaborative and personal approach to development relations can have on project work. This relates to another critical methodological consideration in terms of development relations. In Chapter Five, and drawing on Eriksson Baaz (2005), I made mention of the way the identities of development personnel themselves shape the way international development is framed (see Chapter Two and Three). Relationships and encounters are structured by artificial distinctions between the ‘developed’ aid donor and the ‘developing’ aid recipient (Eriksson Baaz, 2005; see also Power (2006) on the issues of race and racism in development).

Given this, development workers, practitioners, managers (and, of course, academics) and others involved in development aid, will need to rise to the challenge, as Schech (1998) put it “...of coming to terms with their own racialised and gendered ideas about their own and other cultures” (1998, 401). I would add to this ‘secularised’ ideas which could similarly, if unacknowledged, lead to an underestimation of religion as a key feature of social life in the region (Douglas, 2002). This raises the necessity of a training agenda (Schech, 1998) which would do well to incorporate fields such as anthropology, sociology and human geography in order to sensitise would-be development personnel to the region’s

¹³⁶ Though these questions have played a fundamental part in reshaping anthropology since the

complexities and dynamic histories¹³⁷ (see below). The personal introspection and depth of knowledge such an agenda might invoke would be a significant first step to engender better (read: genuine) cross-cultural understanding.

The final implication I want to highlight here is raised by the issue of language and the closely related matter of mutually constructed meanings. In one development practitioner interview, the medium of language was introduced for its conduit role in providing mutual understanding between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians:

[When] the people talk to one another in the Fijian villages they are talking Hindi...the Fijians are talking Hindi to one another. So they have grown up side by side. So at the rural level they are all doing their own thing and going out into the gardens and making their living that way and working the land. So they are talking to one another [in both languages] and understanding each other (Development Practitioner, Interview 1: 2002).

Similarly, the Indo-Fijian writer, Subramani (2000 cited in Ghosh, 2004), considers multilingualism a potential catalyst for the creation of new cultural forms in the country:

mid-1980s (Marcus and Fischer, 1986).

¹³⁷ In her role as Fellow in the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project at The Australian National University (ANU), Douglas provided some training to AusAID personnel on various issues pertinent to the region (Douglas, 2002, pers., comm.).

I would like to see a seamless flow of languages...If you go to some schools now, it's already happening. In the playground students switch from one language to another. They speak a pidgin variety of English that freely incorporates Fijian and Hindi...The multilingual medium could have a great impact (Subramani, 2000 cited in Ghosh, 2004: 126).

This same emphasis on the significance of language as a conciliatory device was also highlighted by NGOs such as Fiji's Women's Rights Movement (FWRM, Interview 1: 2002) and other activists (Jalal, 2002). Imrana Jalal, for instance, proposes the need for the Fijian language to become the *lingua franca* of social intercourse in the country. For Jalal (2002), "[t]his is the lens through which we can understand Fijian culture" (2002, 28).

These ideas and attempts to facilitate cross-cultural communication and understanding in Fiji are certainly crucial and came through in both sets of interviews conducted in the country. This sense of seeking out commonalities and linkages between Fiji's main social groups is strong in Fiji, despite ongoing attempts by Fiji's elite to jettison conciliatory efforts (see 5.5). As Robertson and Sutherland (2001) assert, establishing a shared national identity will not involve claiming Indigenous identity at the expense of other identities, least of all a national one. Rather, for Fiji to prosper one nation must emerge with Fijians *of all cultures* working collectively. For Robertson and Sutherland (2001), this implies the

enormously powerful gesture of referring to everyone as Fijian¹³⁸, thus conveying to everyone that they belong and that they are equal.

In Chapter Five I emphasised Chakrabarty's (2000 cited in Ghosh, 2004) conciliatory offering which focused on the shared predicament of Fiji's main social groups. For Chakrabarty, this conversation is not based only on an understanding of each other's 'shared histories', "...but on the shared predicament of having been colonised (politically and intellectually)" (2000 cited in Ghosh, 2004: 128). In this sense, then, moving forward will involve understanding the country's shared pasts (5.4), not as a nostalgic quest for lost meanings and authenticity, but as a way to explore newly emerging cultural forms. This kind of undertaking is aptly summed up by Ghosh (2004) when stating that "...[c]ommunities can and must reconfigure themselves, drawing *selectively* on remembered pasts (2004, 111 emphasis added). I want to conclude by drawing on a quote by Connell (2007b) which invokes the difficult task ahead in the South Pacific:

Small and fragmented islands and island states sometimes have 'impossible geographies' where tenuous notions of national unity are centred on colonial creations (Connell, 2007b: 119).

I argue that the important task here is that reassessing Fiji's colonially created shared pasts requires current dominant notions of national unity to be drained of

¹³⁸ Another inclusive possibility they suggest is to refer to the indigenous people of Fiji as *I taukei*,

their tenuous appeal. In this sense, the kinds of emphases explored in this thesis place complex questions of shared pasts and futures and issues of methodological choice, squarely in the hands of all involved in development.

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Appendix Item 1

Interview Questions - Version # 1 (1 February, 2002)

INTERVIEWEE THEMES AND QUESTION SHEET

The following questions and related contexts are separated into three parts reflecting different emphases.

Part One

- By way of introduction, I am interested in the role or roles that your organisation plays in development in the Pacific and Fiji in particular?

There is evidence that NGOs are gaining access as never before to decision-making as they are courted in debates over policy and practice.

- What is the organisation's experience of this development in the Pacific context? And, what relationships do you have with AusAID, the World Bank, the UN and others in terms of increasing access to decision-making?

It has been suggested that NGOs run the risk of being co-opted into the agenda's of others and seeing their independent social base eroded as they gain access to increasing amounts of official aid. Performance monitoring and accountability are seen as ways of countering this co-optive potential.

- What are your thoughts regarding this suggestion? And, does the organisation undertake measures to prevent co-option?

A specialist on development and aid asserts that, "...policies, procedures and organisational cultures are determined by individuals, especially those in positions of power".

- To what extent do you feel this view is central to re-distribution of power in development relationships? Do *people* need to change for the distribution of power to change?
- What are the prospects of donors making changes in their own operations and capacity-building programmes to the benefit of local NGOs (those located in Fiji) and CBOs and the communities they serve? i.e., moving beyond traditional capacity building which strengthens the areas that ensure the success of pre-determined interventions set by development agencies toward more of a focus on outcomes that are less circumscribed by rigid project frameworks.
- What do you see your organisation doing differently to other NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies in the Pacific region and Fiji in particular?

Part Two

Several recent analyses produced by Pacific islanders and others suggest that a number of issues are crucial to improving current development practice in the Pacific. The following views represent a selection of those posed by people working in the development aid industry.

Local Priorities and 'participatory' strategies

“Too often, conventional development strategies have brought rewards for some (individuals, regions, social and ethnic groups) but costs for others. Participation is a key principle, for it contends that all people affected by a development activity should be involved in its conception, implementation and evaluation, and share in its rewards. For development practice, participation means more than just consultation and it must involve empowerment in terms of handing control and ownership of activities to those most involved and affected”.

“If we are to participate in the global society we can only do so if we are Tongans, Papua New Guineans, I Kiribati, Fijians, Niueans and Samoans who are modern and not as modern men who happen to live in the Pacific islands. The importance of the cultural and sustainability issue is that it points up the fact that what we want is the modernisation of the faa-Samoa, Faka-Tonga and so on—modernisation of the Pacific Way, and not Westernisation or Asianisation or globalisation”.

“Different paths of development should be informed by a recognition of how cultural factors shaped the way in which societies conceive their own future and choose the means to achieve those futures”.

- What 'participatory' strategies does the organisation undertake?
- To what extent does local people participate in the conception, implementation and evaluation of programmes?
- What importance does the organisation place on cultural aspects when defining sustainability programme?

Lobbying and Advocacy

“NGOs are increasingly aware of the limitations of micro-projects and are asking themselves some hard questions about how to increase, or 'scale-up', the impact of their work. Inevitably, this means interacting in one way or another with the systems and structures, which determine the distribution of power and resources at national and international levels. If development practice is to be more effective in promoting widespread and lasting change, there must be a more explicit linkage between the 'micro' and the 'macro'”.

“NGOs have no control and only selective, modest influence over the 'big picture' factors that determine sustainable impact. Nevertheless, sustainability calls on

NGOs to exert whatever pressure they can on 'big picture' forces and structures so that they reinforce rather than undermine their local efforts.

“There has been insufficient convergence of theory and practice, so that the focus has been on strengthening local communities without enough identification of how these efforts connect with broader action at the other levels”.

- What do you see the organisation's role in terms of lobbying and advocacy?
- What strategies do you undertake to initiate and/or facilitate institutional changes at other levels i.e. within international forums, for instance?
- Is power redistribution attainable? Indeed, is it desirable?
- What is the likelihood of institutional change given existing power relations within the development aid industry?

Part 3

In closing, then, I would like to ask you some questions regarding the prospects for development forays in Fiji given the current political climate in the country.

- In what ways have the events of May 2000 altered the way you undertake your programmes in Fiji?
- What are some of the changes you have undertaken?
- How do your programmes account for local power hierarchies, and ethnic and religious divisions which would invariably intersect with project priorities?
- In your view, what are the prospects for development interventions in post-coup Fiji?

- Can locally generating development alternatives (that is, alternatives defined by communities i.e. 'bottom-up') be genuinely 'scaled-up' to inform policies at other levels?
- Finally, are there any other issues that I may have left out and that you feel we need to talk about?

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

Appendix Item 1 (con't)

Interview Questions - Version # 2 (May 12, 2002)

INTERVIEWEE THEMES AND QUESTION SHEET

About Myself

- Interested in the role that NGOs play in terms of change, particularly influencing policy at various levels
- I have been influenced by the general critique of 'development', especially as a blueprint or predetermined path to 'progress'. In particular that defined from the 'top down'
- I am very interested in feeding information back to the people that I talk to and who make the research possible in the first place. I will be back in September to provide you with a summary of these May interviews

The Organisation

- What are the general concerns of the organisation?
- What are the organisation's approach to address these concerns?
- What year was the organisation formed?
- How is the organisation funded?
- A range of organisations call themselves NGOs. What would your organisation consider to be the main feature of an NGO?

Ideas on Development

- Development is often talked about in economic terms. Do you think looking at a society in this way is too narrow?
- When talking and thinking about the concerns of your organisation do you find a particular framework useful?

Advocacy and Policy

- Do you view advocacy as an important way of highlighting the concerns of your organisation?
- What is your organisations relationship with FCOSS, PIANGO and the NGO Coalition on Human Rights?
- Do you have a relationship with other umbrella organisations?
- What possibilities exist for gaining influence on policy direction with the Fiji government?
- The Forum Secretariat in their vision statement talk about providing opportunities for co-operation with NGOs. Do you have a relationship with the Forum Secretariat in terms of advocacy?
- What relationship does your organisation have with UNDP (or other UN agencies)?
- UNDP talk about 'good governance' as ensuring that the voices of the poor are heard. Do you feel these particular programmes have contributed to the poor being heard?
- Does your organisation have a relationship with AusAID?
 - Are you involved in certain programmes i.e., the Australian Civil Society Support Programme (ACSSP)?
 - Are there mechanisms to advocate your concerns?
 - Do you participate in the design of programmes?
- AusAID's ACSSP aims to target civil society organisations in order to supplement activities which help development partnerships, build social cohesion and conflict resolution, awareness raising on rights and nurture participation in development and good governance. What are your impressions or comments of this focus?
- What changes or reforms would your organisation like to see in relation to:
 - Fiji government

- Agencies such as UNDP
- Bilaterals like AusAID or others

Where from here?

- What are your general impression of 'outsiders' becoming involved in development (in whatever sense) here in Fiji?
 - Especially people like me! Researchers, generally
 - What role would you like to see researchers play in development generally, but particularly in relations to the concerns of your organisation?
 - Indeed, do you feel research has a role to play?
- Do you feel I have missed out issues or concerns that you feel we should discuss in terms of advocacy and policy influence?

Thank you very much for your valuable time!

Appendix Item 1 (con't)

Interview Questions - Version # 3 (May 14, 2002)

INTERVIEWEE THEMES AND QUESTION SHEET

About Myself

- Interested in the role that NGOs play in terms of change, particularly influencing policy at various levels
- I have been influenced by the general critique of 'development', especially as a blueprint or predetermined path to 'progress'. In particular that defined from the 'top down'
- I am very interested in feeding information back to the people that I talk to and who make the research possible in the first place. I will be back in September to provide you with a summary of these May interviews

The Organisation

- What are the general concerns of the organisation?
- What are the organisation's approach to address these concerns?
- What year was the organisation formed?
 - Was it formed in response to a particular concern?
- How is the organisation funded?
 - What is the nature of the relationship with the funding body?
- A range of organisations call themselves NGOs. What would your organisation consider to be the main feature of an NGO?
 - Non-profit, autonomous, voluntary?

Ideas on Development

- Development is often talked about in economic terms. Do you think looking at a society in this way is too narrow?

- Social issues?
- When talking and thinking about the concerns of your organisation do you find a particular framework useful?
 - Human rights?
 - Human development
 - Other frameworks?

Advocacy and Policy

- Do you view advocacy as an important way of highlighting the concerns of your organisation?
- What is your organisations relationship with FCOSS, PIANGO and the NGO Coalition on Human Rights?
- Do you have a relationship with other umbrella organisations?
- What possibilities exist for gaining influence on policy direction with the Fiji government?
 - Do you use certain strategies or focus on certain legislation?
 - Do you have a memorandum of understanding?
- The Forum Secretariat in their vision statement talk about providing opportunities for co-operation with NGOs. Do you have a relationship with the Forum Secretariat in terms of advocacy?
- What relationship does your organisation have with UNDP (or other UN agencies)?
 - Do mechanisms exist where you feel you can participate?
 - Does your organisation have input in the design of programmes?
- UNDP talk about 'good governance' as ensuring that the voices of the poor are heard. Do you feel these particular programmes have contributed to the poor being heard?
- Does your organisation have a relationship with AusAID?
 - Are you involved in certain programmes i.e., the Australian Civil Society Support Programme (ACSSP)?

- Are there mechanisms to advocate your concerns?
- Do you participate in the design of programmes?
- AusAID's ACSSP aims to target civil society organisations in order to supplement activities which help development partnerships, build social cohesion and conflict resolution, awareness raising on rights and nurture participation in development and good governance. What are your impressions or comments of this focus?
- What changes or reforms would your organisation like to see in relation to:
 - Fiji government
 - Agencies such as UNDP
 - Bilaterals like AusAID or others

Where from here?

- What are your general impression of 'outsiders' becoming involved in development (in whatever sense) here in Fiji?
 - Especially people like me! Researchers, generally
 - What role would you like to see researchers play in development generally, but particularly in relations to the concerns of your organisation?
 - Indeed, do you feel research has a role to play?
- Do you feel I have missed out issues or concerns that you feel we should discuss in terms of advocacy and policy influence?

Thank you very much for your valuable time!

Appendix Item 1 (con't)

Interview Questions – Version # 4 (27 September, 2002)

INTERVIEWEE THEMES AND QUESTION SHEET

Introduction and Background

I recognise the sensitive nature of these questions. The responses to these (I assured everyone) will be completely anonymous in any writing up. I was/ am required to gain consent (written or otherwise) prior to undertaking interviews stating such things.

I set the following up as hypothetical questions for the Sept/ Oct visit as I thought it was probably easier to try and address them this way (therefore I was not directing the questions to their particular NGO or institution, but just opening up the issues). As I said these issues/concerns came up all the time within the responses to often unrelated questions. In effect, the people who I interviewed in May provided the issues/question for the Sept/Oct visit...which I thought was really good as I was not defining the direction the research was taking!

1. Democracy, good governance and traditions, customs

How do the 'good governance' programs of development organisations (whether NGOs, bilaterals or multilaterals) that draw on democratic principles, transparency and accountability account for/ interact with traditional values, customs, existing social structures, chiefly predominance?

- ~ at the community level
- ~ at the provincial level
- ~ at the national political level.

Note: The position is held that to view democracy and tradition as both static and oppositional is problematic. Though this has not discouraged people from arguing that democracy is a 'foreign flower' - Qarase being one of the more notable people to do so.

2. Universal human rights, gender equality and traditions, patriarchal structures

How do development organisations (whether NGOs, bilaterals or multilaterals) ensure that the patriarchal structures largely (but not exclusively) found in both Indigenous-Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities are not perpetuated through their programs to the detriment of women? Particularly, those programmes that state universal human rights and gender equality (broadly defined) as underlying principles.

A second related issue that was underlying many of the responses in the interviews was: how do women in Fiji deal/ cope with; on the one hand, a concern to maintain traditions, religious affiliations, customs, while also advocate universal rights that embrace gender equality? Particularly when the latter stance often challenges existing patriarchal structures?

3. Equity between communities

How do NGOs, bilaterals and multilaterals ensure that their programs do not perpetuate or exacerbate disparities - whether economic, political or social - between the two main communities in Fiji? For example, it has been raised that the language of indigenous rights can be used and UN conventions (based on indigenous rights) embraced to the detriment of other communities in the country.

Thank you for your time!

Appendix Item 2

Departments and Organisations Interviewed (April, 2002 – July, 2003)

NGOs, CBOs, Church groups - Fiji

Greenpeace Pacific

Women in Action for Change

Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women

South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology and Environment

Save the Children, Fiji

Reproductive and Family Health Association

Fiji Muslim League

Pacific Concerns Resource Centre

Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy

Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific International

Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific - Fiji

Citizens Constitutional Forum

Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

Methodist Church of Fiji

Fem'LINKPacific

National Council of Women

Promoting Rural Women's Initiatives for Development and Education

Fiji Women's Rights Movement

NGOs - Australia

Family Planning Australia

Union Aid Abroad

Australian Council for International Development

Bilateral organisations

Australian Agency for International Development (Canberra and Fiji)

Inter-government organisations

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Multilateral organisations

United Nations Development Programme

Fiji government

Department of Environment

Department of Education

Department of Social Welfare

Ministry of Health

Appendix Item 3

Feedback themes – AusAID (27 June, 2003)

INTERVIEWEE THEMES and QUESTION SHEET

Thesis title: Specificity Lost? The challenge of intervention; donors, NGOs and the State in Fiji's development process

Background: In the last decade donors have increasingly viewed civil society (and NGOs) as important actors in development. The language of 'participation' and 'partnership' within donor literature emphasises the need to incorporate the citizens of recipient countries into development programmes, and NGOs in particular, are considered significant facilitators of this often complex process. It was within this broader context that interviews were undertaken during two trips to Fiji in 2002 (May and September/October). Interviews were sought with NGO representatives, religious groups, development practitioners, government officials and AusAID, UNDP and Forum Secretariat representatives. The aim was to explore the roles, relationships and understands of the various actors involved in the 'scaling-up' of NGO impact. To what extent are NGOs included in policy dialogue? Are certain NGOs involved and others excluded, and why? What mechanisms exist within larger development agencies, government ministries, inter-government institutions and regional NGOs to incorporate NGO voices?

While these questions provided many and varied insights into development interventions in the country and highlighted the role and potential of NGOs within this process, several recurrent themes were covertly or overtly evident in interviewee responses. The concern within these widely expressed views was that the often overlapping issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'tradition' were not readily considered or understood in development programmes, including within the

NGO community. These themes became the focus of the second trip to Fiji in September and October 2002 where the same NGOs, practitioners, representatives etc., were interviewed. The aim of these meeting was, firstly, to provide feedback to participants on the general trends, issues etc., identified during the first set of interviews; and secondly, to consider more closely the issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'tradition'. Importantly, the themes were raised not as 'barriers', necessarily, but as 'things overlooked' in development policy and programmes. The questions aimed to understand how issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'tradition' are considered in development programmes, particularly those advocating good governance, gender equity and ethnic unity.

The following themes and concerns are designed to identify AusAID's broader goals in Fiji's development process, relating particularly, to the role of NGOs as facilitators of change and the nature of relations with the Fiji Government. More poignantly, to consider AusAID's strategies to incorporate issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'tradition' into its programmes. Clearly, there is an NGO-centred emphasis which can mask the contradictions that often accompany NGO diversity and carries the risk of down-playing the constraints faced by donors. While these issues are acknowledged and discussed within the thesis, the emphasis is more on how 'development' is understood among those involved and what potential exists for NGOs to inform broader debates.

Themes, concerns and questions

NGO related

1. There were a number of structural constraints identified in relation to donor/ NGO relations. The lack of prolonged engagement i.e., 3 year timeframes and staff turnover, for instance, were considered limiting, particularly when 'follow-up' consultation and ongoing rapport is viewed as critical to the sustainability of programmes.

2. One-off training sessions or workshops and a tendency toward changing programme emphases too regularly were identified as limiting to prolonged engagement.
3. More recently donor funding is becoming available in larger 'chunks' and going to larger NGOs that are familiar with the system. This can have implications on which NGOs are invited to the 'table' and which smaller NGOs or CBOs are cut off from resources and from policy dialogue.
4. How does AusAID involve NGOs in the design and implementation of its programmes?

Fiji Government related

5. Given the primacy of the recipient government in bilateral relations, what are the main features of AusAID's relationship with the Fiji government?
6. One aspect of good governance is to encourage collaboration between the government and NGOs. What are some of the ways that AusAID pursues this goal?
7. Transferring 'ownership' of the development process to recipient countries has increasingly become an emphasis of donor support. How is this achieved in the Fijian context?
8. What has been AusAID's response to the Strategic Development Plan 2003 – 2005 and the 20 – Year Development Plan released at the National Economic Summit last year? Particularly, in relation to the government's Affirmative Action policy.

Generic questions to interviewees (from 2nd visit to Fiji - September/October 2002)

These questions emerged from the concerns identified by the NGO community and others involved in development in Fiji. They were not meant to be easily answerable but were designed to generate further discussion. Their sensitive nature was highlighted prior to each interview and anonymity assured to those wishing to remain anonymous. There will invariably be some overlap with issues already addressed previously (above).

1. Democracy, good governance and traditions, customs

How do the 'good governance' programmes of development organisations (whether NGOs, bilaterals or multilaterals) that draw on democratic principles, transparency and accountability account for/ interact with traditional values, customs, existing social structures, chiefly predominance?

- ~ at the community level
- ~ at the provincial level
- ~ at the national political level

Note: The position is held that to view democracy and tradition as both static and oppositional is problematic. Though this has not discouraged people from arguing that democracy is a 'foreign flower' – Prime Minister Qarase being one of the more notable people to do so.

2. Universal human rights, gender equality and traditions, patriarchal structures

How do development organisations (whether NGOs, bilaterals or multilaterals) ensure that the patriarchal structures largely (but not exclusively) found in both Indigenous-Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities are not perpetuated through their programmes to the detriment of women? Particularly, those programmes that state universal human rights and gender equality (broadly defined) as underlying principles.

A second related issue that was underlying many of the responses in the interviews was: how do women in Fiji deal/ cope with; on the one hand, a concern to maintain traditions, religious affiliations, customs, while also advocate universal rights that embrace gender equality? Particularly when the latter stance often challenges existing patriarchal structures?

3. Equity between communities

How do NGOs, bilaterals and multilaterals ensure that their programmes do not perpetuate or exacerbate disparities - whether economic, political or social - between the two main communities in Fiji? For example, it has been raised that the language of indigenous rights can be used and UN conventions (based on indigenous rights) embraced to the detriment of other communities in the country.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix Item 4

Feedback themes – ACFID (26 June, 2003)

INTERVIEWEE THEMES and QUESTION SHEET

Thesis title: Specificity Lost? The challenge of intervention - donors, NGOs and the State in Fiji's development

Background: In the last decade donors have increasingly viewed civil society (and NGOs) as important actors *in* development. The language of 'participation' and 'partnership' within donor literature emphasises the need to incorporate the citizens of recipient countries into development programmes, and NGOs in particular, are considered significant facilitators of this often complex process. It was within this broader context that interviews were undertaken during two trips to Fiji in 2002 (May and September/October). Interviews were sought with NGO representatives, religious groups, development practitioners, government officials and AusAID, UNDP and Forum Secretariat representatives. The aim was to explore the roles, relationships and understandings of the various actors involved in the 'scaling up' of NGO impact. To what extent are NGOs included in policy dialogue? Are certain NGOs involved and others excluded, and why? What mechanisms exist within larger development agencies, government ministries, inter-government institutions and regional NGOs to incorporate NGO voices?

While these questions provided many and varied insights into development interventions in the country and highlighted the role and potential of NGOs within this process, several recurrent themes were covertly or overtly evident in interviewee responses. The concern within these widely expressed views was that the often overlapping issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'tradition' were not readily

considered or understood in development programmes, including within the NGO community. These themes became the focus of the second trip to Fiji in September and October 2002 where the same NGOs, practitioners, representatives etc., were interviewed. The aim of meetings was, firstly, to provide feedback to participants on the general trends, issues etc., identified during the first set of interviews. Secondly, to consider more closely the issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'tradition'. Importantly, the themes were raised not as 'barriers', necessarily, but as 'things overlooked' in development policy and programmes. The questions aimed to understand how issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'tradition' are considered in development programmes, particularly those advocating good governance, gender equity and ethnic unity.

The following themes and concerns are designed to generate discussion on ACFOA's broader NGO goals in the Pacific (and Fiji in particular). The issues relate, firstly, to the structural constraints identified by NGOs operating in Fiji and the region; secondly, to the role that governments (both Australian and Fiji government) should take in development more generally; and thirdly, to consider the ways in which issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'tradition' are incorporated or prioritised within ACFOA's general operations and member activities. Clearly, the research has an NGO-centred focus which can mask the contradictions that often accompany NGO diversity and carries the risk of down-playing the constrained faced by donors. While these issues are acknowledged and discussed within the thesis, the emphasis is more on how 'development' is understood among those involved and what potential exists for NGOs to inform broader debates.

Themes, concerns and questions

1. There were a number of structural constraints identified in relation to donor/ NGO relations. The lack of prolonged engagement i.e., three-year timeframes and staff turnover, for instance, were considered limiting, particularly when

'follow-up' consultation and ongoing rapports is viewed as critical to the sustainability of programmes.

2. One-off training sessions or workshops and a tendency toward changing programme emphases to regularly was identified as limiting to prolonged engagement.
3. More recently, donor funding is becoming available in larger 'chunks' and going to larger NGOs that are familiar with the system. This can have implications on which NGOs are invited to the 'table' and which smaller NGOs or CBOs are cut off from resources and from policy dialogue.
4. While inclusion of NGOs at the regional inter-government level is evident, the inclusiveness seems limited to social aspects and not on issues of trade, economics and politics. Further development of PANG initiatives and capacities was identified as crucial in terms of this lack of broader engagement.
5. Though AusAID contributes significantly to a number of important programmes in Fiji, and the Pacific more broadly, there is an underlying view that Australia could do a lot more to emphasise Pacific issues and concerns in international forums.
6. There is a concern that bilateral and multilateral relations with the Fiji government may perpetuate existing inequalities in the country. For instance, using government ministries as implementing agencies may not foster equitable distribution between communities in the country.
7. NGO relations with the Fiji government are often constraining and antagonistic. Legislative reforms in relation to the activities and diversity of NGOs is considered important to more inclusive relationships.

8. More recent moves by ACFOA to embrace PIANGO and other regional NGOs is considered crucial to gaining greater awareness of Pacific perspectives among Australian NGOs and the Australian public more broadly. This development is believed timely given the recent questionable actions of the Australian government vis-à-vis the Pacific Solution.

Generic questions to interviewees (from 2nd visit to Fiji - September/October 2002)

These questions emerged from the concerns identified by the NGO community and others involved in development in Fiji. They were not meant to be easily answerable but were designed to generate further discussion. Their sensitive nature was highlighted prior to each interview and anonymity assured to those wishing to remain anonymous. There will invariably be some overlap with issues already addressed previously (above).

1. Democracy, good governance and traditions, customs

How do the 'good governance' programmes of development organisations (whether NGOs, bilaterals or multilaterals) that draw on democratic principles, transparency and accountability account for/ interact with traditional values, customs, existing social structures, chiefly predominance?

- ~ at the community level
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Note: The position is held that to view democracy and tradition as both static and oppositional is problematic. Though this has not discouraged people from arguing that democracy is a 'foreign flower' – Prime Minister Qarase being one of the more notable people to do so.

2. Universal human rights, gender equality and traditions, patriarchal structures

How do development organisations (whether NGOs, bilaterals or multilaterals) ensure that the patriarchal structures largely (but not exclusively) found in both Indigenous-Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities are not perpetuated through their programmes to the detriment of women? Particularly, those programmes that state universal human rights and gender equality (broadly defined) as underlying principles.

A second related issue that was underlying many of the responses in the interviews was: how do women in Fiji deal/ cope with; on the one hand, a concern to maintain traditions, religious affiliations, customs, while also advocate universal rights that embrace gender equality? Particularly when the latter stance often challenges existing patriarchal structures?

3. Equity between communities

How do NGOs, bilaterals and multilaterals ensure that their programmes do not perpetuate or exacerbate disparities - whether economic, political or social - between the two main communities in Fiji? For example, it has been raised that the language of indigenous rights can be used and UN conventions (based on indigenous rights) embraced to the detriment of other communities in the country.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix Item 5

Part 1:

‘In your words’ - anecdotes & reflections from Fiji’s NGO communities

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(July 2004)

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Acknowledgements

The central importance of research participants is often downplayed or not given due credit in the end result. Academics owe their comfortable lives to the precious time busy individuals grant researchers, often without guarantee of anything 'productive' or 'concrete'. Having said that, the critical and challenging nature of the material covered in this collection (particularly Section Two) has led me to omit the names of those NGO representatives and other key practitioners who gave their valuable time. I am indebted to each of these people for their support and patience.

I also owe many thanks to those Australian-based interviewees and other contributors who provided me with their thoughts on development relations in the Pacific during early stages of the research leading up to 2002 and more recently in 2003-4. The following people provided crucial contacts and presented various insights and reflections. I warmly thank the following people; Premjeet Singh (UWS, Aust), Peter Swain (Volunteer Service Abroad, NZ), Chris Chevalier (APHEDA, Aust), Neva Wendt (ACFID formerly ACFOA), Vijay Naidu (formerly USP now Victoria University, NZ), John Taylor (CIDA/UNOPS, Fiji), Barbara Rugendyke (UNE, Aust), Nita Singh (PRWIDE, Fiji), Sunil Kumar (USP, Fiji), Jim Redden (ACFID, Canberra), Jocelyn Tattersfield (USP, Fiji), Kathy Richards (ACFID, Canberra), Angela Savage (FPA, Canberra), Melissa Knight (FPA, Canberra), Michelle Evans, (AusAID, Canberra), Ceri Teather (AusAID, Canberra), Jo Hall (AusAID, Canberra), Susan Ivatt (formerly AusAID, Canberra now Aust. High Commission, Fiji) and Henry Vira (PIANGO).

List of acronyms

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development (formerly ACFOA)
ACP	Africa/Caribbean/Pacific (EU grouping)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DTP	Diplomacy Training Program
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NZODA	New Zealand Official Development Assistance
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RRRT	Regional Rights Resource Team
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USP	The University of the South Pacific
WB	The World Bank

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This collection of 'anecdotes and reflections' was compiled following two fieldtrips to Fiji during 2002 as part of my PhD research. The initial trip was intended to gain a general idea of development relations in the country with a particular focus on NGOs and advocacy. The second was an attempt to elaborate on certain issues that seemingly underpinned many of the interview responses from the first trip. The content of *In your words* is a little unconventional in that the often anticipated 'research findings' are largely missing. This is quite deliberate as I intend to make this collection of 'anecdotes and reflections' the first of several more specific and analytical works that draw on the material compiled in 2002 and which take into account recent developments. In particular, they will draw on the interviews that involved donors, government departments or ministries and inter-government organisations both in Fiji and Australia. This will help explain the 'Part 1' in the title indicating the 'work-in-progress' nature of the research. The collection is not intended to be divisive. It attempts, rather, to capture the feelings—concerns, hopes, aspirations—of those involved in development relations in the country and to encourage discussion and further debate on these challenging and critical topics. It would be irresponsible for me to have done otherwise given the consensus among NGO representatives and others who call for 'open dialogue' on these precise issues.

There were a number of reasons for using the direct quote format. First, I wanted to present, quite literally "in your words", the concerns and possibilities identified by those involved in development work in the country without the usual 'academic-speak' and typical (and often aloof) theorising. Though this is unavoidable and required by academia (of which I am a part) theoretical penetration is not something I am trying to achieve here. Second, I wanted to make this collection as much a representative account as possible in so far as these direct quotes reflect a broad overview of many issues that face people living in Fiji and the region more broadly. While I acknowledge many of the issues are certainly not new I would argue their persistence reflects a level of urgency. This said, I am attentive to the fact that even the way I have

categorised the issues and chosen specific quotes to emphasise over others reflect my own prioritising of certain material (and represents a research limitation in itself). Third, I wanted to provide a collection of your perspectives to use as you see fit. Many NGO representatives and donors indicated an interest in knowing 'what NGOs were thinking' on various issues. With that in mind, this collection hopefully contributes in some way¹.

The aim of the collection is to encourage reflection and further debate on the various issues identified by NGOs and others involved in this broad and diverse sector. It also intends to provide anonymous and hence open (and often challenging) accounts. In this way I hope it is beneficial for those working within donor organisations, government and inter-government agencies *and* NGOs in so far as it may further exemplify existing concerns while presenting potential pathways forward. By way of format, I have placed the direct quotes under broad headings and sub-headings. This is problematic to the extent that many of the direct quotes overlap and would be equally suitable under other headings. This is very much the case in Section Two. The complex and often contested areas of tradition, custom, gender, ethnicity and religion are often intimately bound. For this reason the headings in Section Two are limiting in that they mask the overlapping tendencies of these issues. Finally, the limitations of academic research are clearly evidenced in the time taken to produce this initial document.

¹ Certain issues or concerns may be less relevant (or outdated) given interviews were undertaken in 2002.

SECTION ONE: ANECDOTES & REFLECTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT RELATIONS

The sections that make up *In Your Words* largely correspond with the two fieldtrips to Fiji. The quotes in Section One were selected from interviews undertaken in May 2002 while the quotes in Section Two were compiled following the interviews carried out in September and October of that year. The introduction to each chapter provides a short synopsis of the current literature and brief summary of NGO and practitioner views relative to these themes. Included is an indication of underlying sentiments and what this may mean in terms of possible directions in the future.

1. General donor/NGO relations

The increased channelling of development aid through NGOs and the use of local organisations² as implementing agencies, while welcomed for its localised emphasis, has received criticism in terms of the equitable nature of the ensuing relationship (Hulme and Edwards, 1997; Singh, 1994; Van Rooy, 1998). Concern too over the inflexibility of project design, financing and resource allocation has produced a number of criticisms levelled at funding agencies (Hudock, 1999; Overton et al, 1999; see also Emberson-Bain, 1994). This is particularly acute as the overarching goals of bilaterals and multilaterals have broadened to include the once critical language of 'empowerment' and 'participation' into its development lexicon. Many of the contentions stem from the apparent insincerity of donor intentions; namely, the contradiction between the now orthodox use of inclusive language and the continuing hierarchical nature of donor-led structures and practices. These key relational aspects of development are also having an impact on donor/NGO interactions in Fiji's development process. Despite this, a reinvigorated and assertive Pacific viewpoint has emerged that requires genuine consideration (see Hooper, 2000; Teaiwa, Tarte, Maclellan & Penjueli, 2002). Certainly, there are those who

² Referring here to country specific NGOs and CBOs rather than NGOs operating within donor countries i.e. 'Northern' affiliates.

highlight, quite legitimately, the often forgotten constraints that limit donor policy, though in Fiji other concerns seemingly outweigh this aspect of donor/NGO conversations. The impact and ongoing implications of donor-defined conceptions of development is a clear priority especially as it is seen to limit the potential of intervention in the country.

Development interventions; policies, programs, priorities

"The [programme] preparation; I know some of our affiliates have had this problem... when...apply[ing] for transportation. You have villages all over the place...[and] in order to go and talk to them...you are not going to get on the phone and say, hey, we are coming tomorrow...We have to go and see them [and] then when it's alright we come back...[w]hich is anything from doing preliminary interviews or just to hav[ing] a cup of tea...Now [this] takes money and it is important work and part of [the] consultative process. They [donors] tend to give work for program activity. But what about the follow-up? Don't ask me to train somebody and not give the money to follow-up. [E]ven for these national consultation[s] that they have, you know, sometimes we need to say, ok...there is that preparation stage. So give the NGOs the money to prepare themselves in order to have that consultation. Because if you are asking us to espouse good governance, well make sure that we are able to practice it. [T]he NGO volunteer movement here...are paying out of our own pockets to make phone calls and everything else. And also with these big things too; don't ask people to suddenly formulate these big action plans when in the end they really have to go back and check (with the community) as well".

"For me donors sometimes don't really understand the local situation. Sometimes it takes a while for local communities to understand the concepts and appreciate its benefit. By the time they want to do something tangible the funding comes to an end. Or the donors question why is the project so slow. And the answer [for] the slow progress is that the communities' pace is slower!"

"I mean we can all sit around in Suva and say...yada yada yada...but what does that mean for women in Nausori who have a completely different situation than women in Labasa...and don't forget the women in the interior...[and]...then the outer islands. [I]n Suva we can send emails but for these other places sometimes we have to send half a dozen messages on the radio!"

"[S]ometimes they [donors] have a regional program...for Melanesia, for example. [I]t's going to be different for Fiji [though]. We have a totally different make-up out of all the Melanesian countries. [They need to]

recognise that and say Fiji will be dealt with differently. Vanuatu has its own way of doing things, PNG its got its own structures and so on. So give consideration to the national situation...and listen to that community's experiences, because at the end of the day that is what is expected from the NGOs; to provide the community perspective...I know its tough for the donor agencies with people working for three to five years on a contract and then they move on [and] then you have a whole new batch of people, but, I'm sure there is a [better] framework".

"In terms of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, from an NGO perspective, none of their so-called recipe[s] for change [have worked]. They force governments into policies that will bring about...sound economic statistics [but] at the end of the day [they] haven't worked. And again...most of these policies have widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots. I am of the opinion the economic models don't work...a lot of the NGOs you talk to will tell you pretty much the same thing. The recipes they introduce are really recipes for disaster. And it's happened; there are quite a few examples in the Pacific".

"[T]he purpose...is to disseminate information...in their vernacular. Because we find that at the grassroots level if you speak to them in English most of the women probably will understand but they will not really have the in-depth knowledge that they would if you spoke to them in their own [language]. So that is why we have these two trainers going out. ...[So] in order for us to sell what we are selling we need to go out and tell it to them in their language".

"[W]hen I stand back—both as an academic and a practitioner—I [wonder]...what has development brought about? [W]hy is it [that] after...50 years of so-called development, poverty [is] at its almost highest? Why is there inequality? So it is very clear that equal distribution of economic benefits [and] the...whole distributive issue of justice ha[s] not been attended to. So it is very clear that all our models of economic growth have not been quite compatible [with existing models]".

"[A]s a developing country we definitely need outside [aid] and the need to engage with such people [and] organisations. But I think for local groups, local organisations, they need to understand for themselves what it is they really want...Before they are able to engage outside expertise, and that applies at the national level as well...at the government level. We need to say...ok, what kind of reforms do we need what kind of modifications given the experience of other countries, or our difference...our way of life [and] pace of development".

"It seems that the NGOs that are closest to the people get the least funds...the AIDS Task Force is one of these. HIV will destroy this country and nothing is being done about it!"

"[T]he Cotonou Agreement with ACP-EU has actually explicit provision in the agreement that non-state actors have a say in the programming...[I]t looks at the area of aid cooperation, development cooperation, [it] looks at trade partnership arrangements and it looks at the political component of human rights, good governance and respect for law and order and respect for democracy. [It]...is the first multilateral agreement we know of that have specific statements about non-state actors in all three [areas]. It's quite a revolution, in written form...[whether] it actually takes place in practice...is still a challenge!"

Resources, funding & 'capacity building'

"[O]ften, if a donor organisation says...ok, 'I have \$50, 000' for example. It would be easier and more efficient to give it to, say, SOPAC. [To fund] one of these inter-governmental organisations, rather than to divide it into 10 x \$5, 000 community projects, [given] the administrative work and hassle etc. But in the long term you often find with these big projects that strictly go through these national [bodies to be] a waste of money, in a way....So part of that is physical realities, but in the long-term...is it really going to make a difference? Is that really a good way to spend that money? Are they really going to alleviate poverty that way? I am not saying don't give any money to [these bodies]. But I think it is a very shortsighted view. And again I think it is the bureaucracy...it's easier for a bureaucracy to deal with another. It's almost that the bureaucracy is kind of dictating the kind of aid approach in a sense".

"So they [NGOs] need a lot more time and...resources to be able to actually make a difference...[M]ost of the NGOs you ask will say, 'financing...[is] the big issue...[there is] no money to do our work'. And there is a lot of truth to that because the way aid is delivered...the core costs are not covered. So they [donors] will get a good person there for three years and...leave. So the continuity and ongoing nature of the work they are doing is not being supported right now. So they [NGOs] do need to think up ways to survive over time. So they can build on there learning and have more of an impact and scale-up..."

"They [donors] talk about good governance...and we think, well, what is their impact; the work that they put forward...[H]ow can [they] reconcile those huge salaries that they receive and talk about good governance and transparency...all these resources that have been utilised with no impact".

"[So] we are now well into the middle of May and we have not yet received our funds for April, May and June - money promised. And we were told that we would get that last year. We are still fighting for it...it takes a lot of time. I find that UNFPA, and perhaps all UN organisations—[except] WHO, I thought they were good—are very

difficult. Inflexible. Now we have run out of money, because the money for this quarter has not come in...[t]hat is the problem"

"In fact it might be interesting...when you are talking with the local NGOs, [to ask] if people are aware of the constraints that donors themselves face within their own countries and how that may influence their aid projects. It's easy to vilify the donor, but donor agencies are under a lot of pressure too. It might be interesting to see what sort of understanding there is of that...I guess because I have seen it from both sides..."

"[W]hen you are trying to teach people how to advocate it's not like you can go to an organisation and say...'I'm going to teach you some advocacy and lobbying skills'. [It can not be done] in isolation from a particular issue they are trying to work on. I think in the past people have been taken out of their organisations...they are taken to a workshop and the topic is lobbying skills or advocacy skills. My experience with workshops generally is that they don't work unless they are connected in with something else - it has to be a multi-pronged approach to building capacity...Whether it's financial management or whatever. You have to work with organisation[s], with individuals and networks of groups of people. DTP based in Sydney...have a training for Melanesia coming up for Papua New Guinea later this year and they will talk about the UN conventions and how to lobby and all that. Those things are valuable and people find them valuable. So that contributes, but I think you need more direct support for organisations to actually do it! [Actually] how to organise the organisations' to implement that. You come back all excited from the workshop, but then the [organisation's] culture is such that maybe the people who came [to the workshop are not] in charge...So that's why I think you need a lot of different approaches in order to become better advocates. I mean a lot of the capacity building that's been done in the Pacific and that would include Fiji and other countries, has been donor led, donor designed...[In] very few circumstances...NGOs have identified their own learning needs and [have] then been empowered to do something about it...Its been too much donor driven..."

"During the [2nd Regional Stakeholders] Workshop held last year in Nadi the whole thing [was] turned upside down and the NGOs got control of the meeting, which was great...[T]hey asserted their independence...[and] a lot of people liken it to decolonisation, like in the Maori situation and the Aborigines in Australia, though to a lesser degree....[T]here was a parallel process going on [and] the NGO leaders themselves spent the whole workshop basically figuring out for themselves what their priorit[ies] were. How they wanted this process to work for them [and]...it worked out OK. [S]ome people who understand these processes, and understand colonisation/decolonisation were quite thrilled by it. Other donors felt [they were] like cardboard cut outs, watching someone else's process and got a little cheesed off that they didn't get to talk about their programs. [S]o not everybody was happy.

But overall there was a breakthrough because it marked for the first time Pacific Islanders, in this context, were taking control of their own development processes”.

“I think donors have to start thinking about these things too – when they pluck! A lot of this ‘plucking’ happens. [They will say] ‘we want an NGO perspective’ so they will just write around and try...to grab someone and bring them in there, so they can say that we consulted with the NGOs. It’s real tokenism, it’s ‘lip service’...not real genuine interest at all. It’s just to satisfy whomever they have to satisfy, in terms of accountability. [Just] to say ‘we have checked’, we have consulted with NGOs [and]...not looking at the quality of that consultation and the process that needs to go into it”.

“[W]e received a grant from the Ta Ke Kano Fund and at the moment we have had some problems with our beehives. We don’t have a good resource person here, I mean, we have got our agricultural officer but he doesn’t know anything about bees. So we thought [of] inviting an Indian person from Tuvua...we invited him and said, look, we don’t understand [the problem with our beehives]. The agricultural officer works for the Beelines in Fiji but he is a business person [and] is not as interested about our projects. [H]e is also money minded because it is his business. So we thought of inviting [this person] from Tavua and he spoke...in Hindi [which we] understood...[H]e was very happy to be invited by us and we worked with him for a day...If the Ta Ke Kano Fund is giving money to the communities in Fiji – I mean if it is spending such a lot of money, then the Ta Ke Kano Fund should supply us with an [appropriately skilled] resource person”.

“I would say that in Fiji, for example, all the land and all the natural resources belong to the Fijians and if a donor has an interest in developing some environmental projects it will definitely benefit the owners of the resources directly. Whereas for the Indians, I wonder, what will we do to help the Indian communities? [I]f a donor wanted to help Indian communities it would be people in the cane field areas. What would they do for them? [E]specially if the land is not secured for them...I don’t know what they would do for the Indian people, because if they want to build a school or something, they have to really see that the land is secured and everything is in place so that when the lease expires they don’t have to demolish the school or something like that. So with the fishing projects and stuff it’s for the Fijians. When it’s to do with the environmental protection or development or eco-tourism, it’s going to be for the Fijians. Even for the government program, the benefit will go to them...unless they are making a road to the Indian community”.

“[Y]ou have to also teach people how to lobby and how to advocate and negotiate... and like I say that could be skills building [or it] can be at the organisational or the individual level. [S]o...the NGO Coalition...happened spontaneously. [It] was one person’s initiative and

then other people joined and its taken on a life of its own. That [the NGO Coalition] needs to be supported [and] I think donors and other people have a roll to play in supporting these kinds of groups to form and then do the work...A lot of programs though...come in with preconceived ideas...they've got a project—the issue is governance—and these [are] some of the issues around governance and this is what you should be doing to address these problems and it is not led by these people themselves. They don't identify [with] it...maybe their issue is that they want...a space to play rugby! That's the big issue in the community. That's what they want to focus on not governance and other things and what they bring in. It's a different way of thinking about development".

2. UN agencies: UNDP and NGOs

Scepticism about UN agencies and UNDP in particular is widespread and often scathing (Alger, 1998; Archibugi, 1993; Childers, 1997). The basis for these criticisms typically focus on its perceived bureaucratic inertia, programme inflexibility, limited community engagement and a general aversion to opulent workplaces and excessive wages. While these criticisms are seemingly endemic and can hardly be dismissed, UNDP have taken measures to support Pacific-based organisations and collaborations and continue to fund critical resources (for example, RRRT). The ongoing support (with CIDA) of the *Pacific NGO Capacity Building Initiative* is one example where UN agencies contribute to facilitating negotiations which can lead to new ways of thinking about development goals and potential benefits. Having said that, one key issue facing UNDP and other UN agencies is the extent to which reform of its bureaucratic inclination is achievable, firstly; and secondly, if these structural constraints are lessened, how does a less-fettered administrative framework impact at the local level? Certainly, the initiatives outlined above have fostered increased dialogue, but more crucially, have led to the establishment of locally-staffed mechanisms of critique.

Relations, concerns & constraints

"[J]ust recently too UNDP have [focused on the] government's education for better governance. [I wanted to]...raise the issue, how long are they going to be interested in this? Are they going to have it for two years and drop it like a hot cake and are not interested in it anymore? [We wanted to make] the point that often they show interest in some vital issues like poverty or non-formal education and it's on for two years and then they drop it. They're not interested in it any longer because there is funding for something else".

"[UNDP, UNFPA] they want publicity and all the materials that come with [our] project, they want UNFPA [on the material]. They want their logo on it...just so that everybody knows that they are involved in it...[T]hese materials are not for publicising the donor or the implementing agency or the executing agent...They are there to get the message across, you don't want to put too many other things on it".

"The [UNDP] focus on good governance is good, but I think they need to...work with NGOs that are of the same interest rather than trying to co-

opt their agenda. For example, they did a recent thing on the electoral system; we were not invited [to] that. Now, we have been working in this area for a long time, why weren't we invited! But they got someone from overseas, and some academics".

"[UNDP] set up projects around Fiji and once and a while you get to hear...in the media that...they [have been] fund raising in our country rather [than] providing

support to local institutions...[instead of] feeding through existing one's. They can provide us with technical expertise, financing and that sort of thing. [But]...I don't think it is up to them to do that".

"You ask me what they [UNDP] are doing with advocacy and NGOs, well I would say, I would say not all that much. They don't have mechanisms in place where they regularly dialogue with civil society organisations. So although it is a primary UN mandate to partner with them and they bring them in when they can [though only] when it's convenient for them".

"If UNDP want to really work with people, live with the people. [A]nd as I said, democracy cannot be shoved down someone's throat...[UNDP] have got to live the people's lifestyle. They don't live the people's lifestyle; they have no understanding of what people go through in this country. They have no understanding what the sugar cane farmers go through".

"Why is UNDP in Fiji? Because UNDP have nothing to do with the poor and marginalised people in Fiji".

"Some years ago to access UNDP funds, say, \$3000 – \$5000, there was a large amount of accounting processes involved. Too much to justify spending the time to fill out the form!"

"[W]e certainly have a relationship with UNDP [but] again...just based on my experience working in the Pacific, I haven't really seen UNDP programs...Well maybe that's unfair...but they don't often reach the community and again it's very much focused on national government...I guess the most successful programs I have seen is with UN volunteers and that [is] kind of specific. I am thinking of some of the outer-island solar pump projects in Kiribati [for instance]...But they are more comfortable dealing...and again, maybe it's just the bureaucratic structure. It is easier for them to deal with other bureaucracies...You don't tend to see much impact in terms of grassroots development".

"[M]ost of these UN agencies...don't have that contact with the people on the ground at all....[T]hey use you for a resource-base...[they say], 'just give us your statistics and we will take it from there'. And a lot of NGOs will just do that but we sort of said, no, there is a process that needs to

happen...because we are always negotiating to be on that level. You just can't come in and dictate this..."

"I don't understand how UNDP and these other organisations...they work so quickly and they have such wide arching goals and objectives and they are so time-bound about the things they want to do. Their whole approach...the whole aid system is kind of a barrier to it".

"[The] problem with some multilaterals i.e., UNDP [is that] they continually run workshops and talk and analyse...We don't want workshops! [W]e want community-based projects that contribute to change. [It] seems that UN and other bilaterals have this general list of things to do and just 'tick-the-box' when 'capacity building' or another workshop [is] completed".

Emerging possibilities

"My experience has always been that anybody can do anything if you give them the space to do it! And don't be so prescriptive...This is the issue we are going to talk about...'what are your views?'....[W]hat are you going to do about it"...[T]his facilitates the process. They [donors, NGOs etc.] can figure out anything, they can solve any problem, really, but it's the process. People don't understand, people want outcomes, they want results, they want impact. And they've got these logframes and everything has...to be predetermined before the project starts. You've got to do it in so many years [and so on]...the whole aid system needs to be reformed so that its much more responsive...dynamic...[I]ts about learning rather than about accounting for money, we've got this number of outputs. There is a lot of work being done in this area but there is a lot of work to be done yet..."

"[W]e had a [new]...UNFPA representative come into the country and I think it was in his second week in Fiji he just walked over to our office and asked me if there was something we could get together and do. [So the programme's success] came about because the head of UNFPA was prepared to come down and talk to local NGOs and discuss things. We had several representatives before him...they always operated at the [upper levels]. They contacted ministers and never actually came down [to our office]...But he was completely different! He got involved in the work with us and participated in the development of the project".

"[M]ore and more now I am seeing...at the last minute they [UNDP] would pluck someone and send them over there [to a meeting or conference, for example] without any preparation, without any understanding about what they would bring back and how they would share that information...[Now] people are understanding that process a little more. They are organising before they go to try and get everyone's views [and] consulting...[Now] they bring a statement with them, a

position where they stand on a certain issue to the meeting and then they come back and report back. So that's starting to happen more and more often now. So that's a UN contribution, globally, but also in the Pacific and even in the country level where there is some benefit in attending those things and preparing and giving support to actually go through it. Before they would give support just for a person to fly there. [N]ow they recognise they need to give support for some consultation before hand and send them there and maybe there is some work they can do while they are there and then come back and de-brief...That's one contribution [UNDP have] made and continues to make".

"WHO...and UNICEF does quite a bit of work in terms of health...[T]hey go in if they are called in to assist...other sister UN agencies or other donors...[O]ne of the bigger health projects they did undertake was in the late 1980s where they [requested] I think 60 volunteers as doctors in Fiji and it was very successful, but I think it was quite taxing on them, I think administratively...[T]he country was in a mess, no doctors, health standards were going down...[T]he first couple of months there were problems because there were language difficulties (there were 40 from Burma and 20 [from] the Philippines, but in the end these doctors were well liked...".

"[We] get the odd UNDP consultancy team coming through seeking the views of NGOs on particular issues...I know late last year they were developing there regional program for the Pacific so they sent out sector based consultancy teams to look at the various sectorial priorities that they identified and sought NGO opinions on whether these priorities were realistic, whether the approaches were realistic. Even things like whether the NGOs felt there were other priorities. [S]o of late...the consultancy teams that have gone out have been quite good. They also [have] ad hoc bodies [and] forums – there is a gender forum that meets, very informally, UNDP [are] pretty much involved with that as well. So our working relationship is quite good".

3. Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)

The overall decline in Australia's aid funding (as a percentage of GNI; ACFID, 2004), the meshing of aid with trade³, increased competition for diminishing funds, and the overt declaration of self-interest in the government's mission statement has led to conflicting views about AusAID in the Pacific. Three aspects relating to AusAID activities in Fiji are evident. First, the heightened emphasis on the Pacific region and AusAID's support of key NGOs operating in the country have enhanced the impact of selected NGOs. Second, ACFID has played an instrumental role in this shift of AusAID focus and needs to maintain its critical activities. Third, AusAID needs to re-consider its policy regarding the use of consultancies and instead more often utilise Pacific 'specialists', especially if they intend to maintain and publicise their 'participatory' development focus. Despite the apparent national selfishness, critical voices do exist within AusAID though their propensities are constrained by bureaucratic limitations and departmental mandates. Therefore, to perceive of AusAID as a coherent bureaucracy with a single corporate vision is too simplistic a position. A fundamental question remains though regarding the possibilities provided by critical personnel. How far, for instance, can active individuals working within bilateral organisations (or multilaterals) push the boundaries of 'partner' governments and their own bureaucracy's interventions?

AusAID Focus and priorities

"AusAID is very Australia oriented...I think that is their mission statement...to serve Australian interested abroad...I guess the rational is that a stable world is good for Australia".

"I am very please to have confirmed that AusAID (and ACFID) consider the Pacific a priority. Sometimes I wonder whether Australia thinks its in the Pacific (laughter)...I had the pleasure in reminding them that the Pacific is not [just] their backyard, [but that] they are in fact an extension of the Pacific...[S]o with the AusAID strategy I see some hope and some light in terms of beginning to grapple with Pacific problems from a Pacific approach. I think in terms of the managers in AusAID...there is a genuine desire to work with the Pacific and look at it from Pacific perspectives but they just don't know how and that is what they are struggling with. And

³ The so-called 'privatisation' of development.

it's made worst by the fact that Australia has always seen itself as telling the Pacific what it knows".

"[F]or me ACFID is in an instrumental position to assist AusAID because AusAID supports the Pacific through a lot of NGOs, and I think we have a critical mass of Australians and organisations already developing partnership relationships with the Pacific. So all of a sudden we see that ACFID is in a strategic position to mobilise awareness education and a developmental approach rather than a charity approach to the Pacific. And I think AusAID too has been challenging ACFID, in terms of its commitment to the Pacific because even though they might say they are committed...when you look at the resources up until now it has always been Africa and Asia. So obviously ACFID is gearing itself to give focus to the Pacific and we are very pleased that they have created this post of Pacific Policy Officer funded by the constituents of ACFID which shows a commitment".

"But I know here in Fiji, they [AusAID] are quite open and come to NGOs and listen. But in terms of bureaucracy...it's a little more difficult. [Though] I was working in Kiribati [and] they were supporting an environmental education project of ours and pretty much let us do our own thing...[this] was through the Australian affiliate".

Attitudes toward & concerns about AusAID

"I think with AusAID they are a conservative government...[T]hey are not really strong on supporting civil society organisations. In fact, Downer has said a few things quite disparaging...that [he] did not have much time for NGOs in the Pacific in general. He did not think that NGOs are representative of constituencies. [He made the point] that they are just activists".

"The Australian government, for example, needs to be more careful/pushy when giving aid to Pacific governments. They need to make sure that governments are more accountable for the funds...Aid can foster corruption in some governments".

"[I]t was published in the paper last week. AusAID provided money to the government to do a public reform program...I know that the consultant is [an] Australian...[T]hese are conditions that are attached...most of the time they will bring the consultant in from their country. So if they gave them, technically...\$1 million in aid and pay the consultant \$300,000 you only get \$600,000 after you pay everything else...But then sometimes we might be taking a loan on that \$1 million, but we pay for the \$1 million, we don't pay for the \$600,000. [These] are some of the [issues] we have".

"There is kind of a post-colonial mentality that I have observed [within NGOs and] that was legitimate questioning, but I think it is time to take that next step...Like, for example, say AusAID coming in with programs and the response being, 'oh, you are just being neo-colonialist'...I think that was a right stage to go through, nations becoming independent and questioning...[things]. But I think in a way it has kind of gone beyond that now and recognising the globalised world [we live in] and what constraints [are] faced. Sometimes it's a bit frustrating when you hear the same things rehashed to you...the same things that were rehashed ten or twenty years ago...you think it's time for the next step. Not to say that there isn't a colonial mentality, certainly there is, but again the world is different now. If you get an understanding of how donor agencies work, constraints and pressures [it is difficult]."

"[W]e [NGOs] share a common concern that as governments like AusAID try to become more business like in their approach...contracting everything out...the private sector will end up being the deliver of aid and just perpetuate this colonial thing rather than recognising that NGOs add-value in the humanitarian cause".

"If it was not for AusAID, we would have collapsed. They kept us going...in the most difficult of times their assistance has helped us...get out into the community and do things...[T]hey have a respect for our organisation because we have done things professionally, we give them reports on time and we give them human angle stories..."

"[I]f you a talking about the region, the Pacific...we are in your backyard! And I know, I finished high school in Australia, went to college...and I know there is a lot of focus on Asia...But I keep thinking, we are just here...We are right in your faces [so] it's just to make your community, your Australian community aware that there are issues in the Pacific as well – we are very close... [W]hen you talk about global meetings or globalisation I think Australia is a major player when it comes to global issues. When you are talking about global negotiations, and for us in the Pacific, singularly...or even collectively, we can't even get our foot through the door...[W]hen you look at the Forum Secretariat and who are members – Australia [is] a member. If you look at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community – Australia is a member. So Australia has a hand in most of these developmental bodies... [so] in terms of advocating or lobbying for the Pacific Islands on issues Australia could play a bigger role. That's been one of my major, if you like, things about Australia's role in the Pacific".

"I think AusAID does seem to have a heart for NGOs here [in Fiji]. That has been my experience. There was a time under the Rabuka regime...when there was a strong move by [the Fiji] government to demand that all aid must come through government. So all countries giving aid had to give aid through government and government would decide where it goes. However Australia, New Zealand, Britain and

Canada were the main ones who stood out against this. They said, 'no, we reserve the right to give money, independently of government'".

"One big advocacy issue for NGOs here is how to influence AusAID [a]nd get them to think about CS in a different way...There has been problems, there has been histories...Then you go to New Zealand [it is a] smaller country, the links [with] New Zealand NGOs in the Pacific [are] obvious...you to go to New Zealand and you get right into the network".

4. NGOs and relations

The ability of NGOs to impact on government and donor policy and structures has been a topic of increased interest among NGOs and their affiliate networks and also within practitioner and activist circles. Recent prominence of NGO advocacy and lobbying capacity largely represents a continuation of the sense of urgency that characterised debates around 'scaling-up' NGO impact during the 1990s (Blackburn & Holland, 1996; Edwards & Hulme, 1992; Hulme & Edwards, 1997). But as direct funding through NGOs (whether 'northern' or 'southern') has increased alongside trends toward 'professionalisation'⁴ of the aid industry, the implications of this for NGO autonomy, internal operations and critical activity, have become manifest. Several trends can be discerned in Fiji's NGO communities in relation to these effects and the general prioritising of advocacy. First, NGO concern on specific topics has effectively led to a separation of the more critical and socially and politically adept NGOs (illustrated by the creation of the NGO Coalition on Human Rights) with those more conservative organisations with less radical intent.⁵ Second, funding has become more directed towards particular NGOs. While this has enhanced the impact of their activities, this narrowing of resource allocation can result in equally crucial NGOs (in terms of their socially transformative potential) being excluded. In particular, this could lead to the marginalisation of smaller organisations due to their more critical stance and because they are less well-versed in administrative procedures. Third, concerns have been raised over the extent to which NGO agendas can be co-opted by donors, especially those that rely heavily on them for funds (see also Singh, 1994). Fourth, the dominance of Suva in terms of its centralised role in government and prominent location for development bureaucracies has resulted in an equally localised concentration of 'elite' NGOs. This has led to questions over the insular circulation of 'hot topics' in Suva and the possibility of these professional organisations becoming detached from the rural concerns of those living outside the city boundaries.

⁴ Also referred to as the 'new managerialism'.

⁵ Though there are NGOs that actively participate in both.

Points of collaboration & emerging trends

"NGOs have identified over the last decade areas that they think they need strengthened...Actually, advocacy was just added in the last six months...[When] regional NGOs came together they were looking at the framework [and felt] 'we are missing one part of it', that part happens to be on advocacy. How can we strengthen ourself[ves] to become better advocates on issues of concern to certain people? So that has just been added".

"The role of advocacy is in trying to feed things up rather than down".

"[We] are of the opinion that, particularly to the government, if you fuck-up, we will expose you. There is a place and time for an NGO to be diplomatic, and a time and a place to directly speak out—to be more forceful".

"It's...an interesting sector here [in Fiji]. It's probably the most active of any country in the region, but there hasn't been a cohesiveness. [W]e have the NGO Coalition and that's probably one of the best examples of cooperation between NGOs in the region...So its been interesting to watch the development of that even during the coup and the personalities involved, etc...so that's a good initiative...".

"[Another] area that we do is to assist NGOs outside of Suva...[and] making relevant to them issues of good governance, democracy and human rights. [T]hat is an area we are working through our membership with the NGO Coalition on Human Rights...[O]nce we have got out into the field and gauge what is going on we are able to feed it into the Coalition and they are able to see what needs to be done. Because Suva can sometimes be too academic for what is going on in reality...and we have to find the most appropriate ways of communicating to our community stakeholders, to the community. We have to find the most appropriate ways of getting them together. You don't 'workshop' human rights out in the women's groups in the rural areas. You go in and you have to disguise it under a health program or something like that...I mean even here in Suva you talk about human rights, democracy and good governance people say no, no, it's not for us it's for those people over there. So if you want to create ownership of development at the end of the day it means you need to go into the community and...workout; this is my target audience, this is what their needs are, and this is how we can best communicate it to them. So it is social marketing, I guess".

"[I]t seems the things that we see in the newspaper and that we talk about here in Suva amongst these 'elite' NGOs and the donors [is one thing]. The reality is much different down on the ground. I mean night and day different. People weren't talking about the court cases and the problems with Speight [during the coup]. All the things we were worried about, and the constitutional crisis, the multi-party government etc. It

seemed like everyone in the country was talking about that, [they were], but only in Suva”.

“[Our national affiliates]...have individual donor agreements [and] what we try to do is assist them in terms of resource mobilisation [by] going out and looking for monies...[W]e also conduct training in terms of how [to] write a proper donor proposal, how [to] keep records and so forth, just to ensure that they not only get the money but that they account for it and ensure that they implement the project in the manner in which they agreed to...[I]t can be cumbersome but when you look at it from the other [donor] perspective...[it is fair]. So here we are also preaching good governance and transparency...”.

“I know of some donor partners in the past have been talking about [it, though] I don't think its ever happened. Instead of having written proposals organisations will go in and make a presentation, basically selling the idea. But eventually [I guess] you still have to come back to these [proposal] forms”.

NGO limitations (& limitations on NGOs)

“[In terms of]...resourcing CS trust funds etc., [people] are looking at the philanthropic habits of Pacific people and [considering] how that can be harnessed to bring in resources...But for most NGOs they are dependent on foreign aid. The problem is that a lot of foreign aid...to NGOs is coming in larger chunks and the larger chunks are going to the larger NGOs with more experience in doing it. This happens in policy dialogue, this happens in practise...[W]hen you get people to the table you are getting people to the table that know the game, ok, the people who are not coming are the smaller community based organisations that are out there interacting in the community. They are cut off from the resources, from the policy dialogue...from everything else...So in a way donors are shaping what CS looks like...by who they bring in and who they don't bring in...”.

“[T]here is the Te Ka Kano fund and I was critical of it. For one thing, from what I know it brings [in]...civil society groups to apply for funds for small community projects. My criticism [was]...what sort of development mindset are they advocating to people? To enhance the global capitalist system and...perpetuate the whole thing!...Or would you like to empower...groups to think alternative...[F]or me that is the crucial bit. Unless people learn to think alternatively to what has been 'done'...[nothing will change]”.

“The problem is that when we approach UNDP or other funding agencies...[we] will be wanting to do programs on Poverty issues...for example, and the funding agency will have a current funding allocation for Women in Development. [The] impression was that the funding

agency representatives would suggest that the program parameters be widened to include women's issues (so to be able to access the funds). In other words, there was a danger of our research being donor-driven rather than meeting the needs we felt we needed to address."

"FCOSS claims to be 'the' national focal point for civil society in Fiji...but then a lot of other development and advocacy focus organisations are not members of FCOSS [and] operate quite independent of each other...[P]eople say that sectors go through stages of development. One of it is dependency – they hold onto information, and then they become independent and able to work on their own. [T]hen they work towards inter-dependence. And they [NGOs] haven't quite, other than the NGO Coalition, got to that stage yet. That's my personal opinion, other people may disagree".

"One of the difficulties we face...as a regional organisation...[is]...that our national affiliates need to take a bigger role...[W]e would like to participate, but as a regional NGO [we can not]. We would like the national NGOs to have more ownership and say in each country. Whether it's to do with a [Pacific] Island or a Fijian issue. So the national NGO has a lot more say in the running of the program, rather than [the] regional organisations dominating. That's been our standpoint and we have tried to be very careful not to cross the path of national positions because [a] national NGO might disagree with a regional NGO's position".

"[T]hat has been our struggle in the NGO Coalition on Human Rights [especially] in the height of the crisis....[W]e know...the NGO Coalition has made the policy that when it comes to press releases only three or four people can sign the press release. Now for us we don't agree with that kind of position. [F]or a press release it has to be written by all....The NGO Coalition did this as a strategy to have a quick response time on issues...the danger is that not everybody has a say".

"[Y]ou can not have a uniform framework or approach to reform. You have to be flexible in terms of countries. [T]hey have to be specific to each country...I think in terms of our work we are not against reform totally. [W]e say that there is need to reform, if it benefits. But the terms of the reform is what needs to be looked at... [T]here is the need for a window or mechanism where communities, NGOs, civil society organisations can participate in the whole negotiation [and] implementation of the reform...I think that's what's missing...we have not been able to identify that window".

"Within the NGO movement there is always...competition for resources and that kind of thing...We work with the government at various levels [and] in order to bring about policy changes we sit in some of the government committees and our role there is mainly as an advocacy

group to try and bring about their change...[W]hile we are there we may get some support but that has never stopped us from being critical of government...".

5. NGO engagement with the Fiji government & inter-government organisations (PIFS)

The relationship between governments and NGOs can be tenuous and conflictual. But this tidy oppositional view masks the ways in which NGOs are neither inherently in opposition to the state, nor inherently resilient to the influence of the state apparatus (Gray, 1999). For instance, Van Rooy (1997) conceptualises NGO/ state relations as a continuum of opposition and collaboration with particular government departments, ministries and other key powerbrokers. In terms of NGO engagement with the Fiji government, negotiations around legal frameworks, budget allocations and political representation are often contingent upon and determined by ideas about what constitutes national identity and the constraining aspects of particular versions of tradition. The budget level for the Ministry of Women, for example, has raised questions over the genuine commitment of the government to mainstream gender issues and highlights the way in which certain traditional structures can derail attempts at gender equality. The deregistration of the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF) too has caused various levels of consternation (but perhaps not surprise) among Fiji's NGO communities. CCF's strong criticism of government attempts to abrogate the 1997 Constitution and support of the High Court judgement (2 November 2000) was seemingly too inflammatory at a time when the Fiji government was asserting its nationalist agenda. In terms of collaboration, close ties exist between some NGOs and government officials in the country. Indeed, the staffing of NGOs by government people and the housing of NGOs within government complexes highlight concerns over funding and resource bias.

PIFS's position toward NGOs (or 'non-state actors') reflected in their adoption of the NGO Policy Consultation Framework (2000) though well received remains largely only an indication of intent as there remains scepticism of this new-found language and whether or not this will be converted to genuine change on the ground (Von Strokirch, 2001). This is particularly the case with respect to gender issues though in a broader sense there is a feeling that the PIFS have

been *required* to include NGOs in their policy recommendations in response to external pressure (ADB, for example) rather than an internal desire to include NGO voices. Certainly, inclusion became an imperative for the PIFS following the 2000 Cotonou Agreement between the African, Caribbean, Pacific Group and the European Union as consultation with non-state actors became mandatory in the implementation of programs.

Fiji government - taking gender seriously?

"So politics is about negotiation...Now to take it the next step to women in politics; it's not just about getting the numbers into parliament – that's only a quarter of the challenge. The other challenge is to have a strong women's caucus...Because you can have women from the different political parties in parliament but that doesn't mean they are going to keep the women's voice strong. They get squashed by the party agenda..."

"The core budget at the end of the day will show a true commitment from the government for women[s] development in this country...[R]ight now our Ministry of Women is too reliant on bilateral funding. The government doesn't give much at all...[T]he Women's Plan of Action, which is supposed to be the national document for women in development here, hardly [has] any money...They set up all these taskforces...for us to monitor it and all that...but [with] no money. The Information Office has a \$5000 dollar budget for information and communication. [H]ow many women is she going to reach that way?"

"Attitudes [towards women are] the biggest thing. [C]ombating the attitudes which are prevalent, not just from perpetrators, but in the services and within the policy making bodies, magistrates etc."

"Even with[in] the Ministry of Agriculture meetings...consultation[s] are with men. [W]hereas women make up a large percentage of farmers in this country".

"So we have the Suva City Council elections and the Lautoka City Council elections and all the different municipalities have their elections. People come out of their neighbourhoods and they start representing their town or city. That way you are able to get a sense of community also and that is what is really important. Because I think at that level also women are going to be feeling a lot more encouraged to speak out before they take that next step into the national lobby".

Government reforms, regulations & restrictions

“[W]atching what’s going on in New Zealand with government reforms...Argentina, you name it...This privatisation approach—it’s wiping out advocacy period! You look at New Zealand’s experience. [T]here is some good documentation about what is happened with public reforms...But [privatisation] wipe[s] out the creative sector and [has] built a lot of mistrust between the sector and the government and now they are trying to rebuild and undo a lot of that. So a lot of the grassroots organisations couldn’t survive, in New Zealand [due to]...the contracted costs”.

“[T]he whole environment; the legal and the regulatory environment in which NGOs are operating [in Fiji]...determine[s] the kind of NGOs that develop, how they flourish, how much say they have etc. We have had cases in Fiji, and you would know about it already, the Citizens Constitutional Forum was deregulated [as it] didn’t fit into the charitable trust act. [T]hey were advocating and challenging the government. So I see this as an issue, because they have to have certain freedoms and they have to be protected by certain laws. Governments don’t recognise the advocacy role that NGOs can play...the watchdog role. And I think that has to be embraced by government to make it [legitimate] for people to speak out against policies. [In] this budget there should be more money in this area, [for instance]...[So] unless you have the framework and regulations...they [the government] always have recourse...they can just shut down the NGO sector with one act of parliament”.

“[I]mmediately after the political strife in the year 2000 we had several teams come in from the UN, and the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Secretariat out of Brussels. They came in and had consultation about the situation on the ground and invitations were issued by the government to organisations for consultation...[R]egional NGOs were left out - for what reason only the government knows...[I]t could have been that they probably felt the regional NGOs...are staffed by a wide cross-section of people from throughout the Pacific and outside the Pacific [so] maybe they saw them as ‘not local’?”

“If you look at the legislation that determines what is an NGO, how...you register as an NGO...it’s pathetic! The Charitable Act itself is two or three paragraphs. [A]nd if you look at the categories, the five categories...it’s limiting. It’s the tradition[al], service deliveries, charitable organisations...etc...[W]e need [a] legislative framework...to govern the operations of NGOs in Fiji and the Pacific. [If this occurs] I think in some way we’ll actually force our governments to recognise the role that NGOs play in development...”.

“[J]ust in relation to this so-called wonderful thing ‘affirmative action’. I have always believed, particularly in relation to business [that you can not]...bridge the so-called economic gap between one race and the rest

of the races by issuing handouts. I have always been of the firm belief that it will never happen. I believe they should work on performance-based incentives. If you want to encourage Fijians in business you say, ok, we will give you a short tax holiday [and] if your business performs [and] achieve[s] a profit...you win this concession. You do not get it in advance. So over the past two decades the situation has been a series of cheap loans, which have not worked. Now you have a situation where you have a department going around running training courses, 'how to run a small business' [courses]. And that certificate is the average guy on the street's meal ticket to get a loan. Like I said earlier, it's not going to bridge the gap, it's just going to make matter[s] worse. And unless they introduce some performance based system the same thing [will happen]. [W]ith education [too] scholarships are granted...but the performance yardsticks are different for one race [to] another. And, again, in the case of the indigenous Fijian, the student knows that [they] don't have to achieve quite as high an exam mark as my Indo-Fijian brother. So it doesn't spur them to reach their full potential. Again, there are many examples and that is just education and business...".

"The difficulty...is that the Pacific Island governments...place the traditional structure over that [civil society space]. The Fiji government...have the councils for the Indigenous Fijians and the district advisory councils for the Indo-Fijians. That [sort] of mechanism needs to channel funds and information but also [has] to receive information from the grassroots on what development projects they need. It's restricting in the sense that it deals only with economic projects. But it is also staunchly traditional...So in terms of that, civil society has a lot of work to do to strengthen. Like I mean it is growing in Fiji, the strength of civil society and the NGO Coalition for Human Rights is an indication of that, but it has along way to go to be able to say, yes, we [NGOs] can be a part of this. Unless you reform the whole provincial district advisory council mechanism [change will not occur]".

"There is this debate about why do we [NGOs] need a policy. [W]e have always been around without the policy. But what has become really clear is that while there is a recognition by government of the role of NGOs they are not getting any real support...[For instance], we have international organisation[s] that assist directly with [food], volunteers [etc.]...But when they come into the country there is no supportive immigration procedures. They still have to pay taxes and customs duties. Like this is a charity [organisation]! So there is a lot of areas where [government]...really value the work of communities, churches and NGOs. But when they want to do something they have got these [detering procedures]..."

"[W]e were talking just yesterday at the workshop and we have decided that we need to develop our interests so we—beginning with squatters—can try and not just be an education organisation, but [be] a more activist organisation in that area and try and help squatters represent themselves

[and] take up their interest with [the] Native Land Trust Board or the Ministry of Local government or the Prime Minister. [T]o help them know about their rights and how to go about it. [M]aybe at the beginning we go with them to represent them, but ultimately what we need to do is empower them so that they represent themselves and have the confidence to do that. We can probably begin to help them get organised so that they can then lobby themselves for their interests. That's how we see ourselves as promoting equity".

Observations & collective concerns

"The irony in some respects is that there is an interlinking of NGOs with government in terms of staffing and people on boards etc. Some people within government sit on NGO boards, they spend time together, they are friends in many cases".

"I don't think now days you can have good economic development without good governance...[P]eople from overseas who are wondering...should look at the record of the government. Is it stable? Does it follow the law? Does it respect the courts? Can the courts deal with commercial case[s] quickly?...Is [there] corruption? [T]hey look at these things...Is the government financially responsible? Do they have big debts? Are they managing their budget well?...[D]onors support us for that reason...[b]ecause they see us as promoting their particular policies".

"[W]hat respect is there for the constitution now, when all these things go on unabated and the crime continues? There is no law and order in this country. There is no respect for law. And you see after the debate in parliament where the Indians were called grass and all the Indians are like weeds...[that's the] Minister for Social Welfare saying that!...Immediately after that you look around and you see what is happening in this country. There is a rise in hate crimes...[A] lot of these crimes have gone unrecorded. People have lost faith in the police and law enforcement. Indians have been beaten up, murdered, raped, and degraded. So how can we build in a country? How can we build good governance when at the top level nothing is happening? You know, those things effect the NGO and community relationships".

"But even what I find with NGOs when we are talking about the law and regulations that guide what NGOs can and can't do. When you start talking about customary law – because we know there is two: introduced law and customary law – CBO's grow up and are influenced by customary law, traditions and how people solve problems and [that] is tied up at the local level and governed by that kind of a system. And people know the differences and they know that they can clash...but they are uncomfortable talking about it. It's almost like they are afraid, you know, that it's taboo...disrespectful...but people are not comfortable

around it. Because people want to protect it, I guess?...The NGOs want to talk about it from an awareness point of view, but they don't want to get into dissecting [it] so they know more about how it works”.

“One of [our] recommendations...was that in the allocation of aid to Fiji the government should involve an NGO representative. I forget who they have on the aid committee but they are all government people; representatives of finance, representatives of foreign affairs, rather a small little group [and] they...decide what aid to request and how aid [is] allocated. So [the] recommendation was that given government recognition of the good work NGOs had done in the country there should be an NGO representative on the aid committee. That...in the allocation of aid there should be a non-government representative. But that also fell on deaf ears”.

“We must learn...from our past mistakes. The culprits [of the coups] are still walking free and we have a culture of violence in this country. And it is being ingrained in the system. At government levels, at all levels. Even at community level we see that, if we fail to do something for communities they will threaten us...Even little kids are doing it, we can see it. So this is what I am saying. [T]here has to be a change of attitude. And the culture of violence started in 1987 – the father of all coups – and he is still walking around...and today he is saying (in the paper), it's OK, I was the first to accomplish, it's OK for me to walk free, but not all the others, they must be locked up! This person has never been reprimanded and as a result we have widening corruption at all levels”.

“On government actions [Acts of parliament] the issue is that policies are going through government, Bills are going through with no legal foundation...the current government is in fact illegitimate”.

“There is a slight conflict of tension in the sense that we have been driven – our reforms in the region have been driven by the World Bank, and ADB...models of market oriented, export driven economies. I think a lot of our [Pacific] governments, and certainly in the circles that I have moved in, the governments that are given advice...don't quite make the connection that these reforms driven by market, [or] export driven economies—[are] not the answer for us in the sense that we don't have a private sector that's robust. We never had a manufacturing base for a long time...Government is our [major] employer in the region”.

“We were trying to get government to listen to NGOs [on the budget]...And so finally we got government (the finance Ministry) to include NGOs in the pre-Budget discussion...[T]he Minister of Finance himself always seemed to find a reason for not being there [and]...they went through the motions of listening to a number of NGOs so they could say, 'Yes we have listened to them'. But in regards [to] taking any notice of what the NGOs said, that was another matter and that hasn't happened”.

"The government is so corrupt and the Ministries [so] bias towards certain conservative NGOs [that] we are often overlooked. Sometimes proposals will be written out and sent into government only for funds to be granted to another women's group with virtually the same proposal".

"[We have] a strange relationship with the government...[S]ometimes the Fiji Government will approach us for particular information at certain times and we will happily provide this, [but] most other times they ignore our existence. It's strange [because] during particular regional meetings government people will try and interact with our representatives all of a sudden".

"The Chaudhry government had begun measures to implement an environment Bill, but the coup ruined all that. Again, environment issues have been relegated to the bottom of the pile in terms of issues of concern. The [current] Fiji government plays lip service to the environment".

"[The] Chaudhry government was more inclined to include the NGO voice. Chaudhry for the first time set up a cabinet committee so to provide direct lobbying of NGO issues and [for NGOs] to put forward propositions to the government. Chaudhry's background as a trade unionist no doubt sensitised him to a broad range of views".

"[O]ne of the areas of the government blueprint is targeted at education. Education will go to the Indigenous Fijian schools which are run by the Methodist Church or even some of the government schools...What it fails to take into consideration [is] that a number of...Indo-Fijian schools run by Indian religious groups...have a larger proportion of Indigenous Fijian students".

"NGOs have been particularly wary of the government and entering into such an understanding or agreement [as an MoU] as it would be perceived as supporting the government...[A]gain for anybody to maintain its autonomy it's best that they keep out of the politics of Fiji, but it's pretty hard to do".

"I firmly believe that part of the problem is that the role of NGOs is not recognised or not understood. [O]r if it is understood and recognised there is a very narrow interpretation about what NGOs role[s] are...[D]uring the crisis in 2000 if anything it brought the NGOs...and CSOs in general, trade unions, employees federations, together. And if only people, or those in authority...politicians would recognise that for that short time that it was NGOs, CSOs who pushed the powers at that time to think about bigger issues, broader issues...[So] there was that one point in time

when we were out there as a whole front for everybody not taking anyone's particular side...We had to put those aside and work for the good of everybody”.

“Then you have got the parliamentary system and people get elected...[T]here is all kinds of problems I think from the last election...the buying of votes and the corruption and all that kind of stuff. So there is an issue there...and I don't know how these guys [donors, NGOs etc.] deal with it. I don't see a lot of change over the years, though people are looking for different ways of doing things...Other than talking to people and putting things on the table and debating about it”.

Indications of change within PIFS

“So regionally...the Forum Secretariat...has a policy on how NGOs and government work together. Now they have problems around definition too; who can come and who cannot come. They have...changed it and it's now called the non-state actor policy...[so] that was a breakthrough...Actually having the Forum Secretariat...develop policies which the national governments implement...”.

“There has been three meetings [and] most of it has been the Forum telling the NGOs what it is their doing...there is very little space. They have gone on for half a day [though, and] the Deputy Secretary General ha[s] been at the meetings for most of them so they are giving it high level support. But there needs to be more work on it. There need[s] to be more exchange and more debate – but these things take time”.

“[T]here is an understanding right now that this forum of [regional] NGOs would meet with the Forum twice a year to discuss issues, burning issues...so it's still in an evolving process...But again the first step has taken place where they are coming together at the table. [B]ut what the NGOs have been pushing for is to be invited to the Forum for technical meetings where there can be some sort of NGO input into some of the policies that are developed at the regional level...NGOs have also suggested an accreditation system [for] NGOs. [S]omething similar to how the UN accredits NGOs and allows NGOs to sit in at respective forums”.

PIFS Bureaucracy - persistent concerns

“With inter-government bodies like the Forum Secretariat, SOPAC, SPREP, SPC...the NGO interaction is with these inter-governmental bodies [only, and] not necessarily with the government that they [represent]”.

"[T]he Forum Secretariat in November 2000 put out a policy which talked about consultation with NGOs. But that was limited in itself because they only wanted to deal with regional NGOs...[and also] they only want to consult on the social issues...The consultation was not open if you wanted to talk about trade issues, if you talked about investment issues. So the argument [from NGOs] when the Forum Secretariat released this statement was that we're back at square one! You only want to consult us if they are social issues, but when you are talking about...trade issues or economic issues...they won't consult NGOs".

"[T]he Forum Secretariat limits national NGO[s] from participating at their...regional NGO group. [This] was something we were talking about at the NGO Coalition...it is...very important for us to use these regional bodies to advocate. [The gender advisor]...has been a great person to work with...[given] the limitations that she has. And I think, the Forum really needs to strengthen its gender working agenda. [T]he Forum Leaders need to make a stronger stand or a stronger commitment to gender issues in the region. Because if it is looking at economic issues, trade issues, if it's looking at security issues...come on....the women in the region [are central to these processes]".

"The CROP agencies are a big 'sink hole, I think. And in the most part they seem to be interested in their own institutional aggrandisement...[T]hey get lots of money and they do a lot of national level workshops where you have 'nice teas' and what not at various hotels. In my experience I have never seen any changes on the ground. I mean that's unfair to say, sure there are exception (and I hope there are exceptions!), but in terms of working with NGOs they usually don't have any channels of engagement with NGOs. Now the Forum...with the EU aid framework...want to be the regional authorising entity and they are mandated under this. Again, this is a donor driven initiative where they are mandated to work with non-state actors. So it will be interesting to see if the Forum is going to try and change...What they do is set up kind of an advisory committee with various regional NGOs...But it is almost like they want to—I guess because they are a bureaucracy—they want things to fit...'you are the regional advisory group'".

"[P]art of it is the culture of these big organisations; these quasi-diplomatic [organisations]. A friend of mine is working for SPC in Numea and she said they even have their duty free shops right in their headquarters where they can go buy their perfume and liquor...[I]t's that whole culture that they have. [I]t's very elitist and very expatriate dominated...I think it's good to benefit from the skills from all around the world. I mean there are a lot of expatriates working for that organisation. But again, as I said the Forum was set up for governments..."

"It's now time to make UN Security Council resolution 13.25 Oct 2000 a reality at the regional level".

6. Development definitions & 'donor speak'

Some of the key debates that absorb those in the development industry centre on contests over definition. Throughout the last decade or so critical theorists and practitioners have begun asking the most fundamental questions that face those working in development aid. "What is development? Who says this is what it is? Who is it for? Who aims to direct it, and for whom?" (Corbridge, 1994: 95). Practitioners and NGO representatives working in Fiji are familiar with these debates. Accompanying this fundamental line of questioning over the limited focus of development and the apparent lack of local ownership in the broader process, is an apprehension about bureaucratic language and added layers of reporting which supplement accounting procedures. This critical resolve, however, is tempered by more optimistic views. Those espousing the possibilities open to human rights principles, and in particular, how these operate within locally generated notions of development, maintain a more hopeful outlook.

The narrow (& confining) focus of development

"[I]t's been a long standard argument, the whole development model – that it's exclusive and doesn't include everybody in the community...[T]he whole definition of development and what that means has been very narrow. And I think the argument...leads to the kind of argument of globalisation as well. That in view of this global development model....community lifestyles, or ways of living are not recognised."

"I know women's groups always talk about...women's contribution [to development] in terms of unpaid work in the house...[but this] is not counted in terms of national [figures]"

"[I]n terms of development...things [are] measured in terms of its economic value... so [I ask] what are the successes of development?...[Is it] how many water tanks that they have [for example]? [These] are measurement/criteria for measuring development in a sense. [It considers] how many children attend school in a particular village... When you go to the village and you talk about facilitat[ing] your own development...the assumption is that people will quickly associate development, the word itself, with money. That's not far behind. So that is the close association between economics and development in that sense. So what are the good indicators for development...if the village

has a TV or a video? [T]hat's an indicator of development, but it's based on a narrow view of economics...".

"I don't know where I read it...this Malaysian guy was saying that, true, the benefits of development can be seen in many countries, health [and] GDP up...But indicators on the social side ha[ve] revealed that the standard has come down. He was referring to things like incest, which is now becoming a big problem here in Fiji. Things like domestic violence is up, abuse of children is up. So indicators on one side are good. To say that economically people have progress[ed], But...socially the impact on social relationships and interactions in the community [is negative]".

"So there is a real lack of understanding amongst economists, particularly, who come and advise our governments of the direct impacts. So the need for social impact analysis, the need for gender analysis, the need for social monitoring programs is ever so crucial if we are going to continue with this productivity/efficiency model [especially in order to]...ensure that the result is equitable, with distribution of benefits".

"The problem is that people need to question what are we developing too. What does development mean? What do we want to look like in the future?"

"I think the other areas [are important too]...Looking at it [development] from an economic, statistical view, again you are looking at it from a national level, and nationally the average may be wonderful [but] a particular segment of the community may be down in the dumps. [S]o...I think there is a need for the data to be de-segregated. [T]o look at it from a geographical perspective, from a gender perspective, probably from an age perspective...".

"What I do see is a real lack of understanding of the causes; the root causes of poverty [within development orthodoxy]. An ignorance of how economic policies directly result and lead to inequitable growth. There is a real lack of social analysis and social science disciplinary approach to it...[The inability in] realising the links between macro policies and interventions in each community. So there is a need for more knowledge to inform the kind of practices that are needed".

The challenges of definition

"Definitions...yes, you can never come up with a definition particularly with this subject matter because you know, its everything and anything to anybody!...But in this region the donor lingo and academics talk about CS now, and by that they mean the whole spectrum from neighbourhood groups or grassroots groups, women's groups, sewing groups...right up to public education, multinational organisations that are dealing with advocacy etc., so welfare up. Any organisation, political parties, trade unions, professional associations...any groups that is not a government organization, that is not a profit making organisation are considered

CSO. And in the Pacific, people think that is what NGOs are. They are used interchangeabl[y]. [T]hey (NGOs) all use the word non-government organisation and I even hear the word community based organisation...that's more about geography. If someone is working at the local level within one particular community that is a CBO. But it doesn't matter what the focus is...or whether it's anyone one of those other kinds of organisations they are still a CSO and NGO. [T]he word CS is being used more often, now, and that's been brought in by donors and development practitioners and whoever else and they use it...other people think they have to use it in order to get money or whatever".

"[I]n terms of a working definition NGOs are what are called development social action organisations that are not government. But in the Pacific NGOs are people who are also working with government, working with churches. I make a distinction between government, churches [and NGOs]...[C]hurches to me are not NGOs. People feel very strong about it, they say we were here before government, we were here before NGOs, we are the church! So the churches are separate. Then we have community-based organisation (CBOs); women's groups, church groups, traditional organisations, indigenous organisations. They don't have to register [as an NGO] they are CBOs. [S]o...I see NGOs as development agents who go in and work on behalf of communities. I don't see them as local communities, and local communities are not NGOs".

"In the National Volunteer Service in Papua New Guinea, for example, it's a legislative body, and its got a government appointed board, but they consider themselves an NGO...because all their work is in the community and it's working for strengthening NGOs...[S]o it could be problematic down the road. [W]ho controls the organisation? How are decisions made? It could be captured easily by the government at any time".

"I think...with all these buzz words...I don't know if there is a real understanding of what it [good governance] means....I mean you hear the Prime Minister...talking about good governance...you know the political situation here. So, I don't know if there is a real understanding about what it means. But its good that its talked about...and part of that too is [that]...it's a donor driven thing. Because donors are saying if we are going to give you money we want some accountability and governance etc. etc....".

"Well...it's just all publicity!...[I]f they [funder/donors] want voices of the poor to be heard they should go down and talk to the poor! Get representatives of the poor to talk to them. But you know, they are only talking to parliamentarians. And most of the parliamentarians don't know how the other half live in the country here".

"UNDP comes up with new [and] very complex slogans...But sometimes it's confusing for people. If it comes from the people themselves you

know they have ownership and they understand it. But it comes from the top, it comes from somewhere”.

“Regarding the ‘good governance’ rhetoric...[we are] heading in the wrong direction! [T]he process involved in good governance is so bureaucratic and imperialist even...[W]hat matters at this level is language, writing reports etc. [T]hese are highly valued. What this approach seems to be doing is moving things away and out of range of lower income groups in Fiji, the actual people that they talk about—these people have nothing! These large institutions want people to fit nicely into categories. The people that [we] work with i.e. people in prison, the homeless, the most marginalised etc. do not fit into these categories”.

On sustainability & human rights rhetoric

“It, [sustainability] needs to be constructed in a way that people have a say and [that] its flexible. [People] talk about sustainability and [achieving] it within two years...[T]he whole issue of sustainability is an unsolved problem for both donors and NGOs. [T]hey talk about sustainability of results, but, of course, NGOs don’t want to be dependent on donors for funding – there is way too much dependency on foreign aid right now”.

“Now the catch [with] ‘sustainable development’ [is that] everything centres around sustainability. But if you don’t have the structure and the system, there is no sustainability...you can not sustain anything”.

“I could throw a brick at people who talk about sustainable development...Sustainable development is just taken on like the other language. What does looking after old people in a home got to do with sustainable development? How about NGOs that are not financial, what does this have to do with sustainable development?”

“Human rights is a good framework. [I]n terms of the environment, everyone should have a right to clean air, food and clean water. These are the rights that we talk about. It is everybody’s responsibility to keep things clean. [For example], car emission is an invasion of our rights”.

“Reproductive health is a rights issue. [G]etting out of a bad marriage is a rights issue...”.

“I am not a relativist, I do not think that just because it’s a different country you can treat people poorly. I do believe in universal rights and a country that has signed universal conventions has a responsibility...”

“I mean for us here in Suva we can talk about human rights or development of human rights, but to communicate it back to the

community, our stakeholders our constituents...it has to be people-centred development. So it's women in development, it's looking at...women's right to have access to clean water and that kind of stuff [and] she is not going to look at it from only her perspective – she is going to think of it from her kids and family perspective. So it's very much, I guess, the women in development approach. But then bringing in the other issues...[A]t the end of the day the people have to [have the] right to be able to define the kind of development. And I guess that links in to human rights, democracy and good governance issues”.

“I think in Fiji I can say that human rights; if you go down the street and ask them a question what is human rights you will get hundreds, thousands of different answers! This is the dilemma. So it gives us a lot of challenges about the advocacy work that we are involved in”.

“[I]t depends on who you talk to in the Pacific. A lot of people claim that human rights is a ‘foreign flower’. I personally feel that without human rights its basically very hard for development to carry on—I think they go together...”.

7. The role of the researcher & academia

Who benefits from research? What obligations do researchers have to those being researched? Who decides the research topic and how it is represented in the eventual 'findings'? Issues around research ethics and methodology have become the focus of renewed concern in the Pacific (Howitt & Jackson, 1998; Kearns, 1997; Lester, 1997; Smith, 1999). Scepticism over research practice, though, has existed for decades (and longer) within geography and development studies more broadly (Perkins, 1992; Teariki, 1992; Walsh, 1992). The kind of questions posed above have challenged academics and other research bodies to reflect on their role in the research process and, more importantly, have forced the academic community to consider the relevance of their research to the immediate concerns of research participants ie., those that ultimately make their research possible (Edwards, 1989; Hulme, 1994). These types of concerns were reflected in responses during the May 2002 interview schedual. So too were the possibilities that could lead from an advocarial and consultative emphasis in research aims.

Effects, limits & scepticism of the research process

"I was in Tonga a couple [of] years ago and a researcher come in to this organisation...and he got access to some villages...[T]he person was studying for some UN agency or ILO [and was] looking at women's myths, women's stories, legions...and was paying them [the villages] money. He said, 'I really want to hear about some of your legions, I know you're really busy, I'll give you some money; you can tell me some of your legions'. Well, the researcher then started these people thinking...if we tell some wild stories that were not true, weren't true legions...[S]o that's the impact of research and money. Another guy, a legitimate guy comes in, an anthropologist, really into it [and] they [the villages] won't share stories with that person unless that person gives them money. [So it is] not the research problem, but there is an ethical issue there...and that's extractive to".

"There was this Canadian volunteer telling me how when she first came to Fiji she hadn't been told there were Indo-Fijians in this country! So that is a bit scary. So research, there obviously needs to be guidelines and all of that, but, you guys seem to be doing alright. I mean your processes and things like that. But that's really important, because people come in and exploit stories...I mean, you are going to get an holistic viewpoint and talk to all sorts of people and that is what is important...But from the

story telling [side], the stories have to now be told by us. We have the capacity to do it...and maybe that will also give an opportunity for young people to have their voice. So more marginal groups – so women's stories are heard”.

“I mean it's a two-way thing. It's also important for us [as] an NGOs to ensure that we are sharing our information so that when researchers are coming into the country they know...oh yes, there is the National Council of Women, there is a women's media group, or there is the NGO Coalition on Human Rights. Because not all the groups get a high profile, like Citizens Constitutional Forum or Fiji Women's Crisis Centre etc. [those] who are constantly in the media profile”.

“[A]s long as they [researchers] are honest from the start...[One] negative case [was] when a lady from a [bilateral organization] was involved with [us] and used the resources here. She now considers herself an 'expert' on Pacific women's issues and got a PhD out of all the information gained here. The thing was that she did not make it known that she was doing research and certainly did not tell anyone here. When at Rio + 5 she was presenting her paper as though it was all her information but...it was our information!”

“...[P]eople apply from Europe and they just want to research [in Fiji]...[T]hey send an email so we say, well, we can make some time and then they ask us for suggested areas, what are the areas of need. So [we reply] maybe you [could] look at the impact of the political crisis; the psychology and that kind of thing. And they say no, no, no we are not interested in that...we are interested in these issues. So they try and look at what our needs are and then if it doesn't fit into line with what they want [they ignore it]...[I]t's a lot of time and effort [with]...no remuneration for our part...and people benefit from that”.

“[This person] often mentioned about an NZODA funded project in Burma where they had a lot of problems because there was too many people from outside; it was too open. People would come [and] research and go and the people were not receiving anything – they didn't know what was happening. It was eco-tourism and it was the national heritage site [and]...too many scientists [were] going in and going out. So that was a problem”.

“Certainly, there is a role for outsiders. [W]e are living in a globalised world and people have to be realistic. I think here in the Pacific, communities really need help managing change. And often you are going to need outsiders to help with that... Helping people manage change but within their own framework...[Importantly] there needs to be respect and flexibility from outsiders when they come in here”.

Research as advocacy

"[T]he world's richer nations have a duty as more and more people go into poverty. I mean the world is not getting better – it's getting worse. People from affluent nations have a duty to change it if they can. I mean the 'Australian interest abroad' thing – you cannot have a safe world if three quarters of the population is destitute...September 11 etc. etc. I mean it's all tied up in these sorts of things. So yes, the role of researchers is [to]...raise awareness and develop constituency at home...Like, for example, you see in some Scandinavian countries. In the Netherlands they give a lot of their GDP to aid. I am not directly familiar with their approach but from what I understand they do tend to have a more long-term approach. And I think that has a lot to do with the fact that the population recognises it; they have a constituency [and] something in the national psyche [that] accepts giving aid..."

"[W]e are trying to develop links between USP and other institutions of learning around research capacity...We need to get the University out into the community and with NGOs and we need to get the community into the University talking to people about real issues. Plus it's a feeding/growing ground for future NGO leaders – we need to bring that perspective into it...[So we want] the program [we are working on] to be taught by NGO leaders, not taught by academics. So that's a hurdle. We went to Guam, for example, in Micronesia and they said this is a great program and said we would like to take it and run it ourselves. We said no no no – we want this owned and driven by NGO leaders, they want to teach [it], they know about it. And they said, to teach at Guam University you need a PhD...so what NGO leaders do you know that have a PhD?...[S]o we have to go through a lot to institutionalise this [and that] takes an incredible amount of time".

"The sooner people are made aware of the truth the better! People see the country as tourists and have no idea what is going on here, 'aren't the people lovely', they say...Outsiders see the situation here in terms of indigenous rights but it is the culture that oppresses indigenous people...[T]he challenge is to get through the levels and layers of bullshit".

"One thing I think is important is that research that is done has a Pacific counterpart—a Pacific Island person—to...not only benefit and have experience and be part of a research team but also that it is a way [for] a Pacific person [to] 'have a say' in the kind of things that will be written...That is always something we try and encourage here...Even if we have an intern attached here we try to have another Pacific person. Likewise for research or consultancy teams...that they [Pacific people] are part of the team".

"I think it is good you are talking to us and asking us about things. What you do with it is your responsibility, but it's a way of releasing our fears, our anger (laughter)"

"Can I also add that when doing research that the women's viewpoint and [the] younger generation or youth are taken into consideration because of the existing patriarchal structures [in the country]. I am wary that if we only keep educating a small percentage of the population with well meaning programs maybe we will not be making any changes on the ground [or] in the communities".

"Scientific research on the environment comes to nothing if it is not translated and understood by the community and in the villages".

"If you can figure out ways of sharing [the research]...posting it like [with] PIANGO or whatever – whatever area and organisation the research is applicable to [and to] somehow get discussions going, recording back...with findings. It's a hard one though...as long as you're sensitive, and you do no harm...If you can always keep that in the back of your mind with whatever you are doing in this area, you should be OK".

SECTION TWO: ENDURING ISSUES IN FIJI'S DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

As mentioned in the general introduction, categorising issues under particular headings is limiting and can conceal the connections that exist between them. Having said that, conversation on the multi-faceted and inter-related issues discussed below seems urgent and necessary, though their contentious nature has largely muted the possibility of open dialogue. The following quote captures the necessity 'to throw everything on the table' and provides an apt precursory note to this section.

“When you look at movements around the world and tensions it is around land, it is around identity, it is around culture. So, for me I see that we are transiting through a period of time, which is very necessary in our history because we have never really talked about it. [W]e have never really come to grips about it, people are in denial about it. And I think that is where class as an issue comes into play and race becomes so politicised that people feel paralysed to talk about it”.

8. Democracy, good governance, traditions & customs

Current debates over the relationship between democracy (and more recently 'good governance') and traditional structures is the latest elaboration of long-standing exchanges over the effects of European imperialism and colonial expansion. For over a decade one of the most vexed questions has been the extent to which democracy is a 'foreign flower' in the Pacific (Bole, 1992; Helu, 1997; Lal, 1992; Lawson, 1997; Naidu, 2000; Ravuvu, 1991; 1992). Debates tend to range from an apparent rebuttal of 'Western' concepts of government aligned with a renewed celebration of 'tradition' or *kastom* (Ravuvu, 1992) to a more adaptable outlook which calls for a responsive position in the context of a globalising world (Naidu, 2000). The quotes below reveal a critical but at times measured response which highlight among other things the participatory aspects of Fijian life, the need to reconsider the sanctity afforded the Great Council of Chiefs (and other hierarchical structures), and appeals to embrace Fiji's inherited colonial legacies and the efforts of all its peoples.

"It's a good question on democracy and good governance. I mean after the 2000 Coup there was a debate that democracy doesn't suit the Fijian situation...[T]here were those against democracy going as far as to say that there should be a *vanua* kind of model. I don't think it is so much the substance that is in question in terms of justice and all those basic elements of accountability, transparency. But I think it's the form of democracy that has been called into question. I mean the extreme of it is that nationalist Fijians are saying that the whole thing [democracy] should be wiped off...[Instead] they should truly look at the form of how it has been practiced here, and we inherited it anyway from our colonial days...Some say that we don't practice democratic principles in the village when in fact [we] do. The whole consultation process is...that the chief has to consult its members on any issue and then he or she makes the decision on it...[T]here is an element of democracy that is being practiced".

"There has been this big review of the Fijian Administration. One of the things to come out of it was the role of the Great Council of Chiefs, its structure and...the whole works...[T]hough they haven't really been discussed with a view to implementing, there has been a reaction to the review by some of the hardline traditionalists – which is to be expected. But again, in relation to development, I feel if those recommendations see the light of day it may assist in development. Because, again I haven't seen the whole document, but I believe some of the things coming out of the recommendations go along with democracy, good governance, accountability and transparency: all these wonderful things we aspire for! (laughter)...".

"[I]n terms of good governance...I think that is the million dollar question here in the region. How do we marry the western principles of good governance and democracy with the traditional structures which we have in the Islands. I think that is one of the major issues that everybody grapples with...because a lot of them by virtue of being colonies and moving to independence and having a Westminster model structure imposed on them – imposed I guess is too strong a word – how do you get that to work within the traditional structures as well...[given] that its hereditary. There is a certain degree of democracy in the traditional structures as well but not in the western sense".

"Good Governance doesn't recognise or [contribute] resources for looking at the indigenous customs in our communities. How can it actually work within those structures in the Pacific? What do we mean by good governance when we have a traditional hierarchy structure? How do you integrate that kind of value [when]...it's a foreign concept!"

"I don't know if anyone does it very well to tell you the truth. I mean any project any program driven from outside coming into a situation in a country like Fiji – I'm not too sure. I think NGOs do it better because they are more in touch with communities [and] they are from that cultural

context. They have better understanding and appreciation [of the local conditions]. While NGOs based in Australia or NZ coming in probably do it better than the multilaterals”.

“[P]eople talk about participation but they really don't know it. And I think that's where the discussion has to happen, around these issues of customs, democracy and where does local government fit into it. It just needs to happen down at that level. Trying to get things moving and get people involved and voicing their concerns and getting them to the right people to get that voice channelled up through the system so then it can trickle down again. It seems that this is the way everything is structured. Then you have got the parliamentary system and people get elected in. It's still not...there is all kinds of problems I think – from the last election...[T]he buying of votes and the corruption and all that kind of stuff. I don't see a lot of change over the years, though people are looking for different ways of doing things. But how do you do it...I'm not too sure, other than talking to people and putting things on the table and debating about it”.

“...[P]eople know the differences [between introduced law and customary law] and they know that they can clash but they are uncomfortable talking about it. It's almost like they are afraid, that it's taboo [or] disrespectful [and] people are not comfortable around it. Because people want to protect it, I guess”.

“[W]e tend to try and tread cautiously. We try to ensure our programs do not contradict the traditional values, customs and norms, and we try to follow the protocols when implementing the programs. Because at the end of the day when we move out of that particular country where we have affiliates, it's our affiliates that have to live with the programs. And unless we 'do like the Romans do when in Rome', our programs will not succeed. Again, there are situations where the customs and norms go against the spirit of democracy and good governance. But again it's trying to find a balance between the two [without]...going up to a chief and saying, 'you're a dictator’”.

“When talk[ing] about the public sector or government...I find [it] very imperative that democracy or aspects of good governance is promoted...is upheld...[Also], if you look at it in a very small community, for instance, say in a Fijian community...we would have a head and there would be different families responsible for different functions in the running and the maintenance of that community. You would have...the fishermen, the carpenters each one had a role. [T]here may not have been one person, one vote...that kind of concept, but there was transparency, you could talk about how to run your community...you fitted in. Then society got into contact with other system[s] and therefore you have to change. But as a Fijian growing up in an urban setting I find it difficult even up to now, in my own traditional setting to be able to

speak my mind when I want to, in a public meeting, [for instance]. [P]rivately [though] I may be able to do it".

"[A]s far as democracy and good governance [go] I mean we also have in our program a section on customary law and where it fits into the whole spectrum of democracy...[W]e feel that when we go out to train about good governance they need to understand that it is not a Western concept...That human rights is really ingrain in everyone. Everyone has the right. It is your right as a human being. So we have a place where we discuss tradition, values and customs and things like that and we have discussions on it...[H]ow will it interact with traditional values? Well, for the chiefly structures...I think that they do interact with democratic principles and good governance...even chiefly structures are beginning to evolve from what it was through this influence and through education".

"[On] our traditional values, as people get educated in Fiji and have more knowledge they begin to do aside with [certain] traditional issues which, I think, they find so hard to apply to their lives...[T]hey try and get themselves a custom to...the Western style of life where, for example, you need money to survive...So I think in those cases all our traditional values and customs and structure[s] are beginning to evolve and change. For example, [regarding] the chiefly predominance in the village, I think in the 1960s you would find that the chiefs where the ones that got themselves educated and they have the Fijian Affairs Board in which government [supplied] money – and that money was specifically put aside for the education of chiefs. That was [the] 1960s and 1970s. [B]ut now in the 1990s and 2000, it is people that have no chiefly title [that] have gone out and got themselves educated and they are well setup in the cities. And I think that there is a power struggle. [S]o when Fijians go back to the village it is quite hard to adopt and listen to the chief who is not educated...".

"[Y]ou will find some people in Fiji today...[are] what you would [call] 'right wing' Fijians. They are into the culture...this nationalistic kind of approach...I think those are the people who are probably trying so hard to stop change, to stop the evolution of the way we have traditionally done things – our values, our customs, our social structures, even our language...[Meanwhile], I think for young Fijian people, like myself, for the younger generation, we feel that we can't relate and we can't adopt to the traditional ways and means of doing things. For example, traditionally for young Fijian women you were never educated but now Fijian women are getting themselves educated. In the area of marriage, for example, you would have at least three weeks of feasting and celebration; whereas now there is only two days. I mean, people are getting away from all those customs. For us, [the marital customs are]...money consuming and a hassle—having all this traditional work [while also] having family responsibilities. So we find that there is this whole change in the way young Fijian people are doing things".

"I participated in one of these workshops [preceding the review of the Fijian Administration]. They were quite critical of the present setup, including the Council of Chiefs on the broad issue of accountability. These issues are being addressed in terms of good governance in the Fijian social structure. They say that the present structure is ineffective...[M]y view basically is that democracy is not inconsistent with traditional structures. And I think the only way to ensure that chiefly leadership is preserved in this century and made relevant is to reform it so that you have the system more accountable and more based on legal accountability and democratic accountability. [Therefore], people that become chiefs are people who are legitimate in that they have been installed through a procedure that is legally accountable. We need to write down in laws the procedure that has to be followed by any person that wants to be a chief. So the procedure is democratic [that] it is transparent...[T]his is not in the [Fijian Administration] report, but it is the view I expressed to the members of the committee. But they have been more muted. [T]hey said, well there must be some criteria for leadership of chiefs and they need to be taught. Whereas I have said myself, you have to not only re-write the legal structure that we have at present—the Fijian Affairs Act etc., so that modern ideas of management are introduced, [but also] these institutions should be more accountable and less bureaucratic and rooted in communities and facilitative for indigenous Fijians at the grassroots...Rather than at present [where] they are too politicised. I keep talking about the chiefly leadership and it is used very much now as a political back-up for what the government want to do. So basically the government uses it - uses the Council of Chiefs for its own political agenda. So we want a more independent Council of Chiefs and the way to do that is to ensure that the Council of Chiefs is based on democratic procedure and that those people that actually become members of the Council of Chiefs are people who have been properly installed through a transparent procedure to become chiefs amongst their people...There must be wide consultation amongst the people including women, they [too] must be consulted...So you can marry the traditional principles of installing chiefs with democracy. You can, for example, state that a person that wants to be chief must have kinship claim, must be able to trace kinship justification to the title, [b]ut at the same time [they] must satisfy the other criteria – that you must be a person that is reasonably well educated with [a] proven leadership record".

"[W]hen I use the word democracy I feel strongly that democracy is not just about a free election. Democracy to me is about participatory development – at all levels...Our recent events [show that] people often confuse parliamentary democracy, or when they think of democracy they think parliamentary democracy [only]...I consider the civil society movement critical...because Fiji as a society is founded on local communities. [A] large amount of our population live in the rural sector so they don't live around parliamentary democracy, they live with community development and a lot of our systems of government has been about a

very centralised system. So when we talk about democracy and good governance, for me, it's about looking at all structures. So it's not [just] parliament v's tradition but [is]...parliament, tradition, NGO governance [and] household governance. We need to look at all levels of structure in society and apply participatory and democratic principles. So families [do] need to be more democratic...if women are educated [for example] you are not [then] going to shut them up. If children are brought up in this modern day of technology they are not going to just sit there and take it from their parents. The same principle can be applied in a traditional setting in a parliamentary setting. So I think people need to realise that democracy in this country goes beyond a parliamentary election".

"I do recognise that the human rights global movement – that includes women's rights and all the rest of it – does push the boundaries of traditions where men and women are born into prescribed roles and delegated authority and mandates. So this whole idea of parliamentary democracy and citizens of the world unite kind of thing does challenge what is...prescribed traditionally".

"But I don't think it [change] will come from the top, it will come from the bottom. I mean in 1987 it was the commoners speaking when they put Bavadra in and the chiefs couldn't have that and got rid of him and called it racism or whatever. But really it was about the chiefs. So my feeling is that it's going to come from the people. It's going to come, like the knocking down of the wall in Germany. It's going to be saying, no!...No more chiefs in political power. You can be our traditional chief [and] have that ceremonial power, say like Lords and Lady's in England or whatever, a figure head. Have all that ceremonial stuff that people require...You need your priests...when it comes to marriages and deaths – it's important to have those ceremonial [positions]. But you shouldn't mix the tradition with...the 'new' form of [political system]".

"For our...program we are working with the people at the community [level]. [S]o we acknowledge the chief and the traditional structure that is there. But people have certain problems with these structures and the way things are done within the community, in terms of transparency, equity and sharing of resources and so forth. People are saying that since a lot of people are questioning the chiefs they are becoming more fairer and these chiefs are [becoming] educated; they know they are accountable. If they lose the faith of the people by being dishonest, by being unfair, then in many respects, people will not contribute in running the village and so on. So there is a slight move these days. The chiefs are scarred of losing faith of these people...Most of the programs in Fiji – I mean donor driven programs, or whatever it is, they know that for these programs to work in a Fijian setup they will have to acknowledge the Provincial Council and the District Council and so on. So basically if they want a project to be successful they have to acknowledge these bodies. If they don't they will probably get the boot, or the project will collapse".

"Fijian systems of government can not just be written off. It is a fact that we have a traditional economy...it's a fact that we have an indigenous culture. And I truly believe that we are not going to find democracy until we see how that co-exists with [human rights]...[P]eople say, well, it's indigenous rights v's human rights. I say are you saying indigenous people are less than human? Indigenous rights are part of human rights. The problem we had in Fiji is part of the colonial legacy. We have a migrant community who are now sixth, seventh born generation, the answer is not to tell them to leave. But we can't skirt around it – let's just put it right on the table and talk about it! And until we recognise the history, and until we recognise we have inherited a colonial legacy, and until we recognise and we keep on working at how this must co-exist, Fijian society is not going to give way to human rights...unless the indigenous people of this country feel their rights as indigenous peoples is being heard, they [will] not be convinced".

"[W]e need to look at what are the lesson's learnt. We need to cross that race divide. [W]e need to cross that religious divide and I realise that some people are stuck in that. But we can't afford to just stay there. We have to move from that...and say, ok, it's give and take. As an indigenous Fijian, I say that I identify with both human right and indigenous rights. I identify with having a strong accountable transparent government and at the same time strong Fijian systems of governance. So I don't see it as an either/ or. But that's difficult in some people's minds because...and maybe because I am privileged enough to not be stuck there...But it is an issue, it basically comes down to an issue of resource. Because some people...feel either victimised or got at in that way".

"I recognise that traditions...support a patriarchal society here...I also recognise the faults, weakness, in a sense, where it may not necessarily be the best person who is going to head the place...[B]ecause it is hereditary you get away with a lot of things because of the virtue of your birth. So those things, I recognise they need to be [considered]. [Also too] if I go into a traditional setting...I will need to do the traditional approach [and to go] to the village person before I would do anything in that particular place".

"[I]t has become more and more [apparent] and people have become more aware that we live in a 'culture of silence' and tradition has made people silent...[T]o listen and obey and not to express their opinions. So that is changing a bit, particularly in the urban areas. But it is still there. Listen and don't express your opinion even though you are on committees and you are a youth representative but you don't say anything. But it's not just youth. It's the whole culture of an hierarchical organisation where the people at the top have the say. And nowadays it's not only the traditional chiefs, the traditional authorities but also elites; business elites, church elites, whatever. So people are meant to just

accept what is being said. More and more though people are not just accepting. They are questioning...so things are changing”.

“To say in today’s environment that values and principles of democracy and human rights are foreign values is saying ‘no’ to foreign influence a little too late. If a government of any country tries to prevent the inevitable change that will happen... due to education, media influences including all forms of entertainment etc., then these governments are really quite blind to what is going on in their countries. Given that change is happening [the question becomes] how do we deal with enabling this change to happen peacefully at all decision making levels? First, as NGOs/CBOs we have to re-educate ourselves about the traditional processes and systems that exist within the traditional indigenous community. For me these processes have been ‘closed’. [A]s a Fiji Islander I am only now probably getting to understand these myself. [H]owever, in order to make change one needs to find an entry point....[F]or much of the work I do [this means] working through the women in leadership positions – it is about making change for long term peace so we cannot afford to make a puritanical stand about not forming alliances with those who may not agree with us. [W]e also have to know how the traditional systems and the whose-who of the other ethnic groups [are]...who are the women leaders [etc]. NGOs probably do this better especially the ‘women’s network’. [T]he women we are working with are easily the best initial contact if we’re going to make a real difference at community level. [B]ut we have to work at their pace. Most are volunteer based workers [and] don’t have telephone, fax or email. [S]o I think this is where funders/donors sometimes ‘miss the beat of the people’ because they are only operating at a ‘professional level’ far removed from how the community really works. [Second], we...have to address all forms of governance structures [then]...we will see where the grey areas exist...[For instance], a traditional leader may also be a national/political leader so how does she/he behave in relation to both these roles? [D]o they discard one and only pursue one style? Does the traditional role give way to the “apolitical”? ie, to be for all the people – not just your traditional constituents. And I think this has/ is the dilemma many Indigenous leaders and even ethnic Indian leaders have had because of our racially polarized political systems. [Third], anyone coming in to work in this environment must ensure they get a balanced viewpoint especially in relation to traditions and customs of all ethnic groups and understand the history and “herstories” that will help explain where the country is at”.

9. The centrality of religion

The impact of missionaries in the Pacific during the 19th century was relatively swift and penetrating. European religious orders were 'indigenised' throughout the Pacific Islands and incorporated into existing traditional structures (Douglas, n.d. see also Douglas, 2002; Gibbs, 1998; Weir, 2000 for significance of religion in Pacific societies). But only recently has religion become an acknowledged consideration in the operations of development organisations, though the extent of this understanding particularly within governance programs is less certain. The powerful tradition/ Christianity nexus plays a crucial role in maintaining existing hierarchical and patriarchal structures in Fiji. Similar oppressive hierarchies within Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religious doctrines also exist which espouse comparable views (to Christianity) toward women.

"It's the biggest challenge for me right now...I come from a Methodist background myself...the religious institutions are very patriarchal in their decision-making, and the recent debate on the whole Family Law Bill issue has just shown that very clearly. Our challenge to those institutions is, well ok, if you are going to speak as 'the church', or 'this religious group' or 'that religious group' be very clear in your consultation process. Are you talking to the women? Are you talking to the youth? [B]ecause too often the patriarchs of the religious institutions make the decisions... [W]e are expected (as women's NGOs) to be all consultative and everything else, [meanwhile] these guys carry on with their decision-making blindly [of] all that. I mean the ultimate goal of [our NGO] at the end of the day is [to] go out and find ourselves a woman to be the President of the Methodist Church! [M]aybe then the Methodist church might get themselves sorted out. The current reconciliation process in this country, the Methodist Church is very important to it because the Methodist Church has not reconciled itself since its own internal coup in 1987...[These] religious institutions what they do is set up their women's sections (like the Methodist Women's Family or the Fiji Women's Muslim League and others) and say well that's fine. So the women actually function quite well, but its [not] mainstreaming and sharing the decision-making...[T]he women in the Fiji Muslim League [for example]...are not in the actual Muslim League decision-making structure...[O]ur challenge with [our NGO] is to strengthen that and also to make sure [we are] ethnically balanced too because there is a very strong indigenous influence....[W]e have to challenge our religious institutions now and also our government institutions [and] the provincial council structure [though] that's a whole different ball game! For indigenous women, that is a big challenge".

"We are constantly talking about a just, compassionate and inclusive society. And all these human rights groups are very much along these lines. But unfortunately...the Methodist Church have really been using Christianity to support ethno-nationalism among Fijians. So it has been a long tradition really...Steven [Ratuva] wrote [on this issue] last year...on ethnic divisiveness and religious divisiveness and the history that he gives is very good – very much to the point. [I]t is something that has been [in Fiji] since the British. [W]e knew that from a number of other sources; the way the British kept both communities apart. But that separateness has been perpetuated under the colonial government, under independent governments and there has been very little effort to really bring people together. So that is one of the big big problems. Steven brings out fairly well that Fijian institutions were mostly colonial creations, but in the minds of Fijians they have been there for all eternity".

"But really it's not about Christianity, it's about Fijian paramountcy. And of course, most Fijians are Christians [and] most Indo-Fijians are not! So if you say, Christianity is [the] state's religion, well, you know it's another way of calling [for] Fijian paramountcy".

"[I]t is the government that supports it [gender inequality] - it suits it [and]...won't ever try and do away with it. But I think it is important to say that [this] is not going to do away with Fijian identity, it's just doing away with some of these male traditional concepts...I think it ha[s] a lot to do with the Methodist religion as well! The Christian missionaries brought in a lot of these structuralised hierarch[ies]...Who knows what it was really like before...So I am sure that that causes antagonism. That the traditional people do not like NGOs because we question it. [T]hey don't like women's groups because we are trying to make the change. They see it as a threat. I mean girls aren't allowed to wear shorts in villages and things like that. [S]o they are trying to keep the women controlled because they...just don't want to lose power! I mean, it's as simple as that, they don't want to lose the power".

"[The TV commercial] started last week and it's been advertised by the Ministry of National Reconciliation. It's in view of tomorrow's celebration of Fiji Day [and it] uses the song of one of the new religious groups [and] it played for the duration of the advertisement...It had crosses on it and [at] the end of it says, 'let's celebrate Fiji Day'. The impression is that to celebrate Fijian Day you had to be a Christian!...[N]obody really challenged that or even the message behind it. And you wonder, how does th[e] funding of the advertisement work? Especially with the donors; AusAID or NZODA. Do they call into question those kind of things or not [particularly]...advertisements that blatantly say to the Fijian people that to celebrate the Fijian day you have to be a Christian person? Since most of Fijians are Christians then you might have to be Fijian as well!"

10. Mainstreaming Gender?

The adoption of Women in Development (WID) and later Gender and Development (GAD) strategies largely emerged following feminist critiques of gender-blind approaches to development (Crewe and Harrison, 1998; Porter and Judd, 1999). Subsequent critiques of both WID and GAD have come from various quarters. One line of criticism focuses on a lack of awareness of the differences between women and in particular a tendency among Western feminists to portray 'Third World' women as passive victims with limited acknowledgement of their diversity or agency (Mohanty, 1988). Despite the mainstreaming of gender issues in development rhetoric gender-sensitive practices have seemingly remained as an additional 'add-on'. In other words, the 'add women and stir' approach largely remains (Porter, 1999). While these debates have equal potency in the Fijian context another set of more localised questions have emerged in addition to concerns over inclusion of women in programs and recognition of their central role in development processes (see Emberson-Bain, 1994; Hooper, 2000). First, there is a sense that aspects of Fijian traditions discriminate against women and are an abuse of culture. Second, there is evidence of gaps between what is incorporated as gender policy at the national level and what is accepted as consistent with traditional values at the Provincial and community level. Third, it is critical to recognise in development programs that it is the perpetrators of inequalities, discrimination and aggression that require education and not just the victims of abuse. Fourth, the 'culture of silence' that often characterises relations within Fijian communities also operate among Indo-Fijians.

"They [donors] have to make a stand. [T]hey have to include in the donor guidelines that women are active participants in the design and implementation of women-specific programs and then they have to give it time to happen, especially as most of the leaders are urban based middle class and their constituents are working or rural class communities/ women. [T]here are many women's NGOs, clubs and groups, who have been working since pre-independence to improve the status of women in all aspects of society. [T]hese organisations...provided the early platform for women's voices to be heard. [T]hey gave birth to today's women's civil society".

"We have found that with our projects a lot have failed principally because the women didn't have the voice in the project. [W]hether starting up, or [through] implementation and so forth. For example, the government of Fiji were doing a project in a particular village cultivating vanilla and the government bought in a considerable amount of money. They showed the men how to do it (the women were not involved at all). Six months later the government went back and they couldn't believe that it didn't work...[and] identified why it failed...[O]ne, with the cultivation of vanilla it's kind of sensitive and it takes small hands. [Two] the pollinating of the vanilla takes place in the early hours of the morning. The men in that particular village drink *kava* all night and wake up about 9 or 10 o'clock and when they wake up the vanilla has already past the period when it should have already been pollinated. So that is just one example, and again there is the issue of the sale and marketing of basic root crops. The men may take [a] couple of bundles to the side of the road and if he has his way he will just flog it off as quickly as possible because he doesn't want to stay at the road and get maximum value. Where[as] in the case of the women, she would prefer to stand on the roadside and get maximum value before she goes back to her place of abode. One small example, but in terms of how do you ensure that women are not marginalised...again governments and development agencies have to be serious about mainstreaming gender into everything they do and that it is not tokenism. I will give you another example in the Fiji Agriculture Ministry. Their top brass are all women...[and] the ministry was an example to how open they were to women in development and gender issues. Now...for some reason gender is not an issues for them!...Most governments were pushed into accepting principles at the last global conference in Beijing. Only then did governments decide that they would allocate a department or Ministry looking at gender issues. But how serious are they? It's something that probably looks nice when you want to sell a project to [the] development agency AusAID. But again whether they are serious is another thing. Issues like ensuring women get heard in decision-making, ensuring women get heard in the allocation of resources [etc]. Giving women equal opportunities to run in local government elections or national government elections...[A] lot of it is [about] the attitudes...[There are] other examples where women who would probably be more suitably qualified to get into parliament decided to stand for elections and ran on tickets in the rural areas. Now, in the rural areas the attitude is that the women's place is in the kitchen or home. So despite her being suitably academically qualified and the right experience, said the right things and had the right manifesto; she was a women...".

"Instead of just trying to protect our culture, lets look at what the realities are for people. Lets look at how are people coping; are they actually being protected by these traditional cultural values? And also we question, well, if it's culture which discriminates against 50% of the population, well, is it a good culture? We get people to actually question,

well is it a good culture. So those are the kind of ways in which we tackle gender equality”.

“[T]here is always this thing that we have to tread softly and this is the Pacific and we have to address it the ‘Pacific Way’ or ‘the Fijian Way’. But I think the thing is we have to challenge these structures. [S]ometime we have to challenge these authorities that exist. Because, otherwise, we keep making excuses. You keep saying, it’s the culture. So that’s more or less the kind of approach that we have taken in terms of challenging these issues and examining the culture and saying, hang on, the culture was not like that—it’s actually an abuse of the culture”.

“Yes, it’s the biggest lobby [issue] now...that we have to have the numbers. But it makes no difference because a women can be just as masculine in her thinking...[A]s women we should not have to adopt this male style of management – we should celebrate being women. But I think for us here in Fiji we have to find our standing as feminists or [as] gender advocates or [as] women advocates in order to feel comfortable...[T]he perception of the bra-burning lesbian feminist is there (laughter)...[but] we need to create a positive image, [a] better image or [a] better understanding of what it means to be a gender advocate or feminist”.

“[F]rom a gender perspective I feel that we have real gender issues, but the problem is that a lot of people don’t know, they can’t name the issue. A lot of people still do not see that it is a gender issue [that it’s] about power and control. They still do not see that men and women are conditioned into respective roles and responsibilities which impact on who make decisions and why they make those decisions...In terms of traditions I think the word gender is new, but it has always been with us. I mean Fijian societ[y] [is] very much founded on what society dictates as the role of men and women. I am somebody who tries to live successfully in whatever culture I go into. [P]art of living successfully is understanding what are the gender roles that are appropriate to that culture at a given time and place. So [for example]...I don’t take my traditional Fijian role and try to play that out in a board room because I would fail miserably. Nor do I try to take my cooperat[ive] role into a village setting. And in my own home we don’t apply those gender codes - we are just who we are. [W]hen I go into a government department I recognise I have to understand the psyche of a Fijian male person or an Indian male person and understand where they are coming from and then I try to negotiate around that. I do believe the fact that we have had male Prime Ministers, male Ministers and there have not been a lot of women in there has everything to do with the kind of leadership we have. But I don’t believe the answer is just having women...I don’t believe in token representation”.

“If you want to empower people (women) from the beginning we need to recognise the kind of cultural system they operate in. It [good

governance] needs to be contextualised. This is our challenge...they [the UN, WB etc.] will talk to the men only at the community level”.

“These traditions in the Pacific have been around for a long time and they have figured out how to survive for a long time...[L]ooking through our [European] glasses it looks as though the men make all the decisions. But what we don't see behind the scene [is that] the women are meeting themselves, and then they nominate someone informally and then they go and talk to the chief on the side...[Y]ou can't see it but there is more consultation I think than we might see if watching it from an anthropological perspective”.

“I think the same [is the case] with an Indo-Fijian women. If I would see an elderly man [and] he said something weird I would [not] say anything. Because he is older...it's just kind of 'understood'...[T]here may be some merit in my questioning him but I am scared – I am probably shy of other people around. So I think it [the 'culture of silence'] probably exists in both the Indo and Indigenous Fijian communities even in the modern setup...[S]ometimes...the [NGO] Director...would say 'why didn't you ask this and that' [during the community consultation]. I would say, I didn't because he is from this village or she is from that village. And [also] the fact that I was probably younger than them I didn't want to say that”.

“I remember going to an Indian community about three weeks ago...[T]he ladies sat and never said anything. So I [asked] the person from the community if it's Ok that I have a separate meeting with the women...I had to do that because they (the women) don't want to have all these men sitting around even their husbands. So we needed to separate them. And I think in the Fijian communities too that's happening. There is a need to separate the two groups but I remember in Rewa - one of the communities there - I saw the women there as well as men. They were kind of quite open, probably because they were quite modernised? They were quite a modernised village and weren't very far away from the city, it depends though. [I]n other rural areas you will not hear women speaking, especially with elders around. [I]f they were young men around, maybe. [Though] because they are old men with higher status in the village [it is difficult]. So...there is the age gap as well [and] not just this gender thing. [I]t's age and maybe the relationship they have—personal relationships [as well]. It seemed as though those at that meeting were around the same age within five or ten years so they felt free [to speak]. But you would not hear a women voice her opinion if you have a man of sixty or seventy and she is say thirty of something”.

“The whole reason women won't, I mean why [we] work with men, is because that's how we fix women's issues. And it was really interesting the workshop on the western side [of Fiji]. [T]hey found it very hard to come to the workshop. [T]hey were very distrusting. They didn't think we were really going to be there. And why were we there anyway? When the

first eight came I thought I would explain why we do this work. I said, as a women's organisation we work with men to make men better so they won't be nasty to women! Well, they all laughed at that, they liked that. [T]hey took that onboard immediately [and] knew where I was coming from and that I wasn't conning them".

"When I worked...[as the] coordinator it was very obvious that the women could only go so far...[W]e had a few solutions that they could deal with practically and then when it came to what are they going to do for themselves all they really felt was that they could work with their children. Like there was no way they could change their husband or that generation. Their feeling was that they have to start working with their children...It didn't matter where we were in Fiji and what race [we worked with] that was basically what it came down to. [S]o it was important that they had something. [That] they had something they could change. [That] they didn't feel totally powerless".

"[W]ith the [incidents of] rape we worked with women primarily because it was about protecting them and because women actually blame each other more than men. When we have done rape [education] in prison the men's typical response of the day is that it is the men's fault. When we show it to a women's audience they tell us that it is the women's fault. [W]omen are very bad...they just take it onboard that they are to blame. So it's having to redress that. But the psyche of it all has changed [to the extent that] now women have devalued themselves so much that younger and younger girls are sexualising their behaviour...that is all they have been taught that they have. And now it is a matter of teaching them to say, no! Because the devaluing has gone in a massive circle...So there [are] still some...very strong traditional ideas and modern ideas [that] have very bad impacts".

"For indigenous women, that is a big challenge. When we conducted our affiliates stocktake...for example, the Rotuman Women's Association said one of their concerns was that there [was] no women's representation on the Rotuman provincial council. And there is only one woman in the advisory council. [N]ow what does that say for the provincial council system. You cannot say that women are not playing a leading role in development or contributing to development even [in] that...traditional structure. So, it's probably that whole confusion between tradition and culture that always gets distorted...So we can still all protect our indigenous culture, our indigenous tradition in this country...At the end of the day, how we develop and progress as a country is extremely critical for the future of our young people, our children. If we are being culturally sensitive to traditional structures that do not seem to want to promote or enable young people to vote when they are 18, [for example] then why allow them to a pub at 18? [Y]ou can get your drivers licence when you are sixteen. You can get married, but you can't vote? That was the total 'sell-out' as far as the constitution was [concerned] for young people".

"[W]omen don't have equal rights in Fiji especially in the rural sector. For example, an Indian [husband and wife] in a rural area...do not get on very well [and] get a separation. The man [will] have his own bank account and when the time comes for the divorce the man takes [the] money out from his bank account and then he puts it somewhere else. So when it comes to [equal] share or equality there is nothing of that here. So, I mean the women lacks alot [in this country]. So...for the rural women (but the urban too) I don't think that they get a share. [Also]...our voices in the house [are] not raised. I mean men don't listen to what we say. And it nearly happens in every Indian home – that our voices are not raised in the house. We are not recognised as women in the house, its happened...I think the same is [true] in the Fijian communities too...[T]here too the man is the head of the house. So what ever he thinks, he does it. [H]e never takes his wife's views...From my point of view I think it is one of the hardest things for a women to bear. That is what I can say, because that is what I feel...and maybe that is happening to me too. [T]he same thing is happening because I can not express myself very openly".

"The Fijian NGOs, the women's NGOs are doing a lot of work on raising the level of women['s] voice in the public area, but also in terms of policies...[R]ecently [there was]...a sexual harassment workshop and it was good that the government ministers picked it up. And there was this whole emphasis on creating a new policy on it. It's quite different when you are [talking with] a national government [as opposed to] a provincial government – provincial leadership, the cultural leadership. The difference has to be taken note of. [For instance], while the national government can say yes, we can implement this sexual harassment policy, the provincial government will say well it's not part of our culture – our chiefs in the villages. So the gap, it's there. And I see the value of addressing the national government policies; but whether or not it will have an impact on the provincial and the village structures and policy makers in the village [is another issue]. So there is a gap and I'm not sure how the women's organisations' are addressing that".

"Women are not in the position to make changes in social [areas]...[T]hey can run away from violence, but it is the men that have...to stop it (their behaviour). So you deal with the men [and]...get them to better manage their anger, manage their behaviour. [To] look at life a little more holistically. [To] think more from a women's point of view etc. [A]ll these things make a difference...[as]...they begin to start having some respect for women and that will make the difference".

"[N]o doubt it will raise conflict and it already has in many of the local communities that I work in. [The] new ways of doing things, business [for example, and] getting women involved in non-traditional roles effectively bring[s] about conflict. I come from the school that sees conflict as an

essential part of progress and change. If there is no conflict there is no change. But it's how we manage and resolve conflict".

11. Issues of ethnicity & identity

The view taken here is that the race issue has to be addressed objectively if social stability and economic prosperity are to be achieved in the near future (Chand, 1997: 1)

A leading question from Chand's observation is how can such an emotionally and politically charged issue be addressed objectively? One aspect is the interconnectedness of ethnicity and identity with government structures and political aspirations. This institutionalised colonial legacy has received much attention particularly as its effects continue to impact on Fiji (Kumar, 1997; Norton, 2000; Ratuva, 2002; Robertson & Sutherland, 2001). In various ways the views expressed below reflect these impacts. But while the differences between Fiji's two main communities are apparent and often (over) emphasised, certain views capture an alternative focus—an appreciation of sameness. In other words, a focus on the similarities that exist and an embrace of the collective histories that have created contemporary Fiji. A second facet of this position is one of recognising the multiple identities that define an individual's perception of themselves. For example, an Indigenous Fijian woman could be a mother, a gender activist, a Methodist, an indigenous advocate, a government official and a chief simultaneously. Each role has different demands that requires flexible and shifting responses. A shared tendency within the more progressive sentiments expressed below is an ability to reflect on one's own traditions and to explore their origins and diverse beginnings.

"The ethnic dilemma in this country right now really needs to be addressed. [Part of our] activities is to show how Indo-Fijian and Indigenous Fijian women go through the same sort of experiences...It's important in workshops to let people know about how stereotyping and prejudice work and operate in society"

"In terms of reconciliation programs one of the things that really annoys me is to see this kind of superficial programs [within church services]...They go to the villages and conduct a prayer service in a day and think that people will reconcile. [Y]ou then will see the man from the Indian community and the man from the Fijian community sitting together and their photo is taken...they're dancing etc..."

“For me, the donors can—in terms of healing—put money into education and curriculum [and the] development of materials. [This] could...socialise our children in schools and in homes [and] in families where they could address their own kind of prejudices. It happens in our homes. We talk about a certain sort of group of people in this way compared to another race and those kinds of things. So there needs to be a lot more public campaigns done in the homes and done in schools to encourage racial harmony. And...in office life [and] even in parliament. There needs to be a huge campaign. You know how they say stop smoking and stop littering...why can't we do something on racial harmony for our donors to

promote...so we talk about it and try to think as one. So yes, let's celebrate our diversities rather than picking [on each other]. Celebrate that we are different and appreciate each other and try to encourage us to think as one people in this country...[L]ets make the best of what we have got”.

“[I]t's in nobody's interest that land leases are not renewed...[A]t the end of the day, some people's attitude on race relations will never change. [It is] the behaviour that impacts on people's lives is what we are concerned with. So for me personally, and if donors want to put pressure, they should not put pressure on small community programs. [T]hey should put pressure on government to make decisions about renewing leases. Because the majority of Indians who suffer are the Indian canefarmers. And a lot of them have no money to get out of the country unlike the Girmitiyas that own shops...Let's identify who are the Indians, and who are the Fijians and who are the others who are victimised by race relations. And who is victimising whom. Because I am not convinced it's a Fijian v's Indian thing. I see that it's an economic thing, it's an age thing, I see it as a political party thing. So I suppose people [donors/NGOs] need to know what programs they are funding and who is behind it. If it is a political party guise under the name of a community awareness program you have to be [aware of this]...[M]aybe we should be funding schools to have healthy race relations for the next twenty five years. I think that people should not be forced to work with the other communities but they should have cross-cultural awareness raising and appreciation”.

“[R]ecently we had the former Human Rights Commissioner from Australia...invited to work on an educational approach (in it's broader sense) for Fiji. So he was working with the Fiji Human Rights Commission and on [this] day...[t]his whole thing of affirmative action and the paramountcy of Fijian interest came up. And [one participant]...mentioned that...the Prime Minister is constantly quoting the constitution, but also miss-quoting it in so far as he leaves out part of it. So he says, the paramountcy of Fijian interests is in the constitution. And [the participant] said, yes, it is here as a protective principle – and

then the former Commissioner picked it up (he must have done some study on it). [H]e said, yes, it's very important to see that it is there as a protective principle. In other words, that if there is any area of dispute or anything comes up then the paramountcy of Fijian interests comes in to say that Fijians must not be subordinated to the interests of other people...But it is now being used by this present government not as a protective principle, but it's been used as a principle to subordinate everybody else to Fijian interests, which is very different".

"We have a Prime Minister that espouses that he was appointed by god, [while] a few days earlier he was talking to the Sai Community members at the Civic Centre...giv[ing] a speech about unity and everybody working together...[It] could be a case of schizophrenic juggling of ideas and ideologies communicated by the politicians right now!"

"There is a difference between national politics and NGO politics. The factor you have to realise is that there has been a rise of nationalism in this country. And the same people can work with you and work with us and run a very good NGO program. But once they are out the door, at the national level they are different. But here they work in a different way; their whole attitude changes...the whole atmosphere changes. Because they come from a different culture; a communal way

of living. [T]heir thinking is much more on communal terms than individual. They don't think for themselves, they think for the community. What the community says goes for them. We have workers here, they cannot make decisions for themselves. So that is the difference...They are bound by [the chiefly system] and what that system says goes...Even if they have harmed people, wronged people, no, it doesn't matter. In 1987 they beat us up, and after that, no, nothing is wrong everything will be alright. Come 2000 they do the same [and], no, you stay in the country, nothings wrong...[B]ecause of nationalism nothing has changed, nobody has been brought to justice. Evictions continue, the violence continues everyday. And these things are happening day after day. People have lost hope in this country. For example, you are an Australian. I don't know what your roots are, Irish, whatever, but you are known as Australian, you were born there, right. Now, here, what home do I have? I consider this my home. But, no, I'm called an Indian...perhaps a bloody Indian. And you know, it's not a choice of my own or my family. And we have worked in this country and now we have reached a stage that we don't have a sense of belongingness – and that's a critical issue, and that effects the whole society".

"Because of the violence, [the] rise of nationalism etc., the two communities have polarised. The Fijian community feels it has been betrayed and exploited by Indians in this country and considers them as visitors (vulagi). The Indian community is of the opinion that it knows no other home than Fiji and feels displaced, confused and desperate to get

out of this country. The[y] have lost that sense of belonging to this nation and the nation does not seem to provide at all. Perhaps the answer lies in mass emigration of this community. Perhaps the British should [be] made accountable for this. So far it has turned a blind eye to the plight and the situation of these people...There is anger in peoples minds. [T]hey are tired of the violence around the country. Indians are being victims of organised thuggery all over. How much more will people take this? I feel at some point in time they will take action or revolt. History of the world has proved this and it is bound to happen here....If you look at the history of coups in this country you will find that it is becoming more and more violent and less respect[ful] of humanity. At some point it will take a nasty turn [if this continues]”.

“[D]onor agencies or partners (I am including everyone that can give assistance in this term) really do [need to do] their homework before venturing into the community. [Y]es, as human rights advocates we all believe that the rights of indigenous people and cultures need to be protected. [B]ut in Fiji's case they would need to understand that there are many processes, institutions and programs that have been in existence since pre-independence which has enabled the indigenous community to prevail. [S]o if these systems have not worked for the indigenous community then we must address these problems honestly and openly which is a bit difficult it seems here in Fiji. [We need to] make the changes to ensure equitable development, not racist development programs as the current government is doing. [T]here is also [another] thing that I am becoming more and more mindful of [and that] is that the Indo-Fijian community continues to allow ‘ourselves’ to be categorised as the wealthy business community – which really is [only] a small percentage of the population. [E]specially when the Minister of Finance himself is espousing this rationale. [S]o basically homework needs to be done”.

“I have thought very seriously about [this] as part of the training...I find myself instilling very strongly a sense of professionalism and code of ethics that says if you work in the public sector, you serve everybody. You cannot come into this [and]...be fixated with I'm Fijian, your Indian, your old, I'm young, and all of that stuff. But I realise that it requires a lot of education and this is where education programs become important. Not just education; people need tools and that is what comes through very strongly is that even if people are willing and the rest of society is very discriminatory, how do I cross that divide and not get attacked in the process? Or if I do get attacked, how do I negotiate my way through? And it's very revealing that a lot of people have non-negotiative skills, a lot of people have very little analytic skills and have very little experience in terms of when you become very vulnerable...what do you do so you don't become victimised? And if you become victimised, what do you do to stay alive...So networking becomes very important I think. [C]reating spaces and opportunities for people to talk in a safe environment without being labelled racist or what not. I think there needs to be a lot of healing.

Because a lot of people that were personally affected by May 2000 and going back to 1987 still feel that the wrongs have never been put right. Now people also have to wake-up [to the fact] that we live in a political environment [where] certain wrongs will never be considered wrongs...”.

“I was in New Zealand recently and we were talking about a village based program and all of a sudden this program manager said to me, well, how are you addressing the issue of making sure that Indians benefit out of this program? And I thought that was the most inappropriate question, because we were dealing with a Fijian village to start off with. So it's not like every cent you spend in Fiji can be divided between Indians and Fijians. I think you would have to understand that if you are about building a Fijian community, you are targeting Fijian communities. But maybe in there you need to have a cultural awareness program so that Fijians don't get too locked into their 'Fijianess'. And when you really look at it, even though Fijians live like this and Indians might [live like that]...all that needs to be done is that they need to talk a lot more about it. Whereas in the urban areas there is a lot more [talk]. It depends who you are talking about as well. Because when you look at the younger people, I have counted in two nights a half a dozen [couples where] the boy is Indian and the girl is Fijian! There is a sub-culture of the younger generation that do not see race as an issue. So it comes back to my earlier point where I think that the race issue is very politicised”.

“The people in the village were talking about how to put food on the table, how to get their kids to school [and access] water and transportation. They are worried about the church taking too much money from them, which has become a national issue...The people talk to one another in the Fijian villages [and] are talking Hindi...The Fijians are talking Hindi to one another. So they have grown up side by side. So at the rural level they are all doing their own thing and going out into the gardens and making their living that way and working the land. So they are talking to one another in [each others] languages and understanding each other. So I think there is more closeness...The crisis in 2000 obviously shook trust all the way down to the grassroots level. People were asking questions and were a little bit disturbed. And there were some bad things that happened to people in various parts of the country as a result of that and a lot of people have left. So there is tension. [T]here is a heightened tension. Now NGOs are going around and we have to mix up more. [W]e have to have more of a multicultural emphasis in our educational system, more intermarrying [etc., in order] to try and promote the two cultures to come together to understanding each other more. So yes, that's good, but I think they are a lot closer than we would think they are”.

“I have found stories which show that Indians were destined to be here thousands of years ago. [With] the Indian histories...[though] it's very hard to dig here for these stories. [T]here is very little and fewer and

fewer people seem to have them. So it is trying to use the 'traditional' to show the 'modern' – I guess in a way...[So in our program] we put in traditional stories – a Fijian one; an old ancient one, and the Indian one. [One] was on the Girmitiyas people when they came to Fiji and were shipwrecked and they nearly all drowned. [W]hen the Fijians hear that story they are very moved by it. They had no idea that indentured labourers were slaves. Although it's in our books they didn't really [know]...[T]here are always comments...and they are really shocked at the conditions and realise how hard it was for the Indians...[I]t was not their choice; they thought they were going down the road. [S]o history is also very important for people to know because it changes their idea about the future".

ONGOING DISCUSSIONS & DEBATES

Many concerns and possibilities are reflected in this collection. But what can these collective views translate to? What issues take priority? One of the central things to emerge from this collection is that providing space for dialogue and collaboration and the establishment of personal relationships is crucial in attempts to address these questions. The provision of space and fostering of relationships is also important in that it *creates a mood that allows* these issues to be talked about openly.

Pathways forward

This rich collection of anecdotes and reflections provide an indication of where Fiji has been and where it might need to go. Donors and governments need to know what the NGO community is thinking in the country. This collection delivers what are primarily NGO voices and to that extent largely centre on their specific concerns. The interviews that involved donors, government departments or ministries and inter-government organisations (both in Fiji and Australia) will be used in future material and will centre on the intricacies of dialogue and collaboration within and between donors, government and NGOs. This will also involve considering the role of ACFID in this process, particularly given its recent prioritising of the Pacific region and well-established advocacy focus.

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